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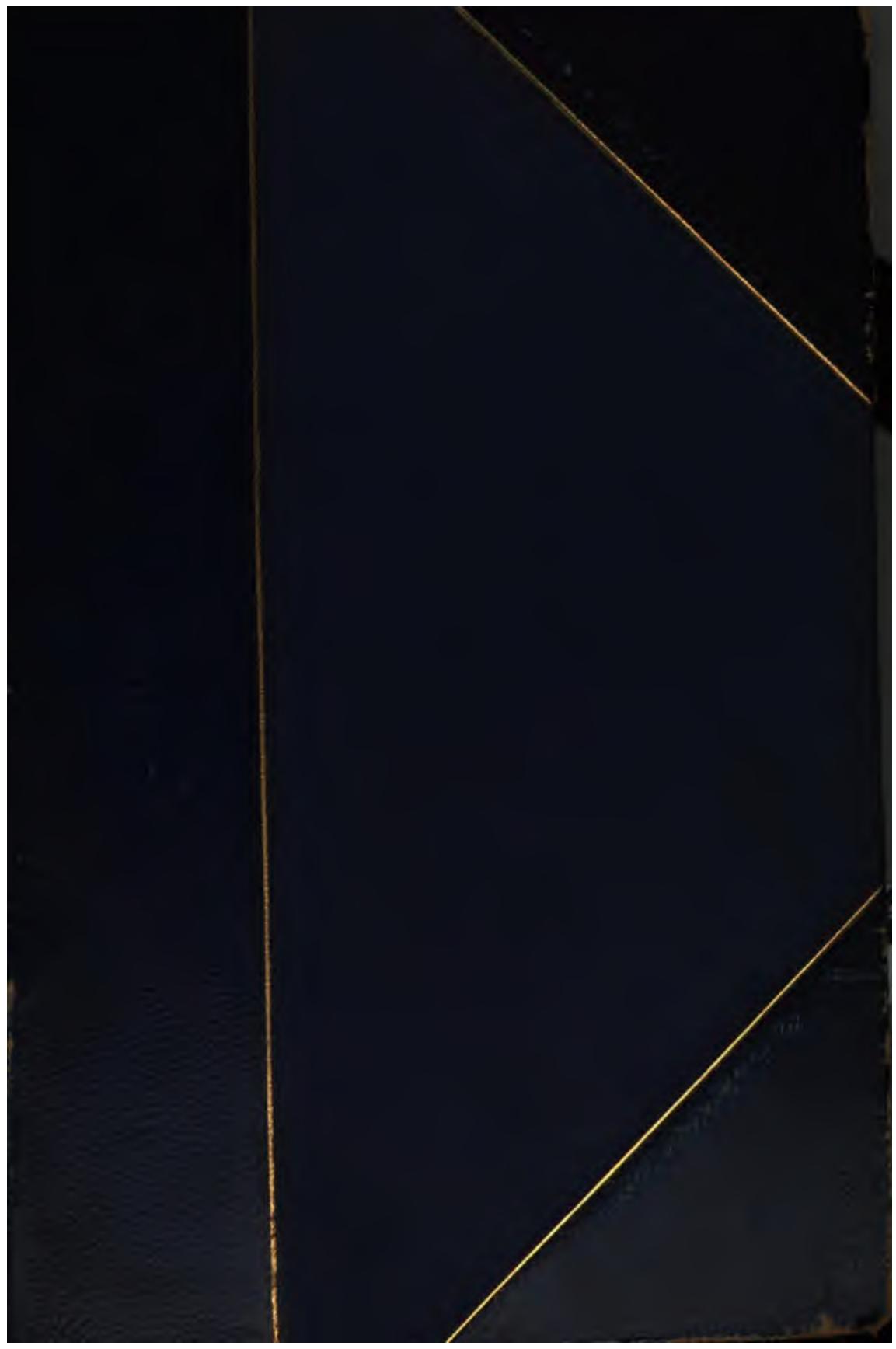
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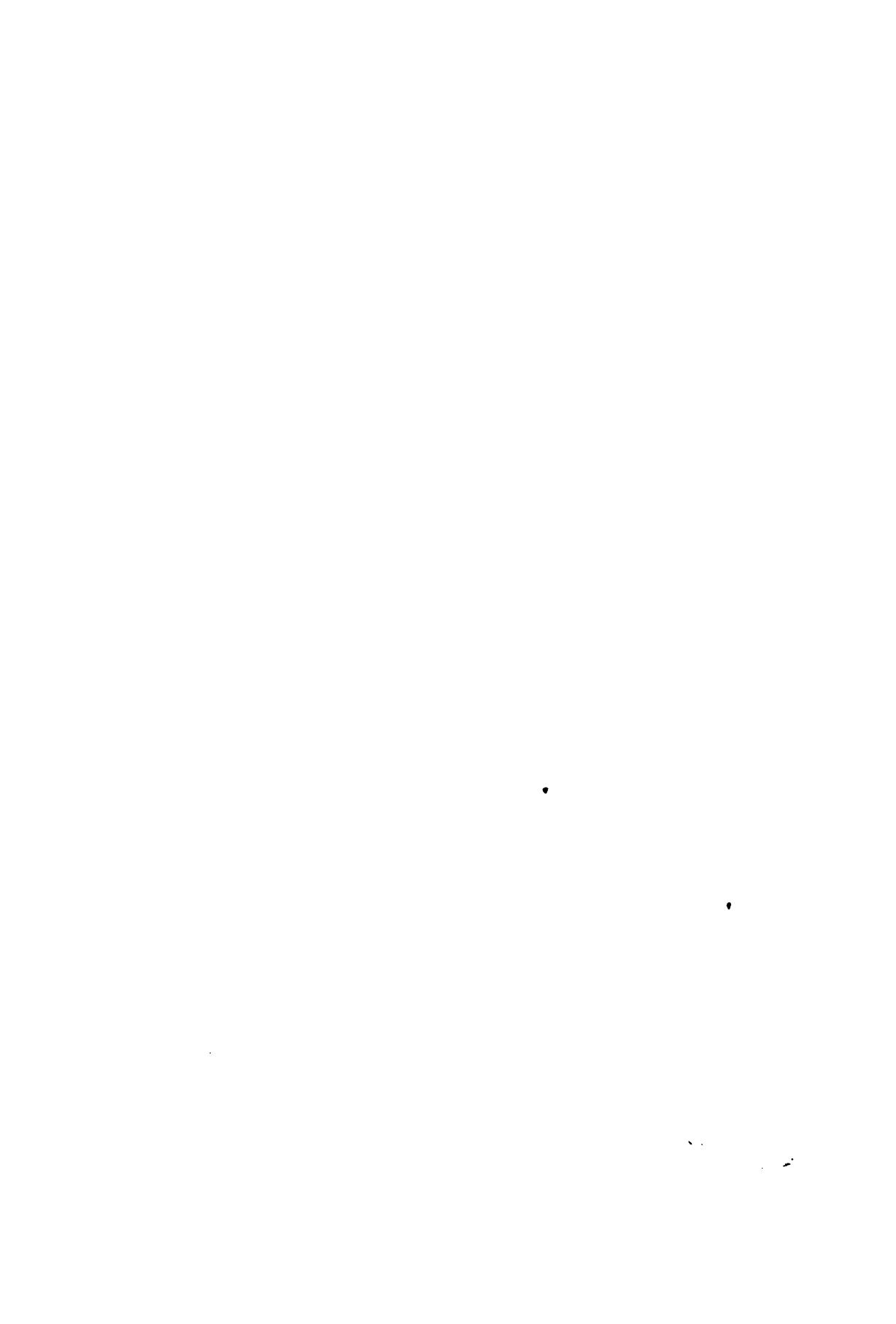


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THE  
SOUVENIRS OF LÉONARD







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THE  
SOUVENIRS OF LÉONARD

Hairdresser to Queen Marie-Antoinette

NOW FIRST RENDERED INTO ENGLISH WITH A PREFACE AND  
ANNOTATIONS

BY

A. TEIXEIRA DE MATTOS

WITH Two PORTRAITS

*IN TWO VOLUMES—VOL. II*

LONDON  
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## CHAPTER I

The Court installed at the Tuilleries—My secret errand to Versailles—The Queen's bed stabbed with daggers—The deserted Château—Marie Antoinette's opinion of Bailly—Pusillanimity of the courtiers—Return of Mademoiselle Bertin and Madame Du Barry—Flight of Madame de Polignac—The conferences between the Due d'Orléans and Mirabeau—I receive a black eye—My assailant receives a drubbing—Lucette—The Comte de Genlis—I entrust Lucette with a mission.

I SAW Louis XVI., his wife, his sister, his children, removed by force from the Palace in which twenty of Henry IV.'s descendants had seen the light, and led almost captive to Paris, escorted by eighty thousand drunken, ragged pretorian guards. I saw the Court, but recently so sumptuous, installed at the Tuilleries, where at first even the strictest necessities were wanting. I saw the most luxurious Princess on earth seated with red, streaming eyes by the side of a smoky hearth, on which no fire had been lighted since six and sixty years. I saw her women bruise their fingers as they clumsily nailed strips of cloth to the doors of the room, in order to keep out the draughts that whistled through the crevices . . . .

And my heart overflowing with pity . . . . pity for the King and Queen of the greatest empire in the world, I returned to Versailles to hasten the arrival of the various services and to collect a number of articles which the Queen was not able to dispense with.

When I reached the Château, there remained but a few old retainers, who had been kept back by the slowness appertaining to their age, or perhaps by the regret of leaving that Palace in which they had been born and in which they hoped to die . . . . And on every side I found the silence of abandonment, the traces of a precipitate departure, which terror had rendered forgetful and distraught . . . . Many a thick volume might be filled with a recital of what I noticed in the rooms of certain

of the ladies who had fled : indiscreet billets which they had left behind; letters on which the ink had barely dried, carrying sweet vows to the banks of the Rhine, upon which the pen, falling from a trembling hand, had blotted the words love, affection, desire, delight, which so often reappeared in these tender missives.

In the Queen's apartments I collected a number of articles that were of value through the associations attached to them: portraits of which I shall not name the originals, documents whose contents shall die in my secret thoughts. My errand was to hunt out everything, to take up everything, to read everything, because Her Majesty knew that Léonard knew how to forget everything.... Nothing had been moved in Marie Antoinette's room since her nocturnal flight. The gown which Her Majesty had worn on the evening of the 5th of October, the kerchief beneath which her heart had beat violently at the approach of the mob from Paris, the silk stockings, turned inside out, which the Queen had taken off on retiring to rest, the fine cambric which the Queen had laid aside to don her night-dress, all lay scattered over the chairs; and under Her Majesty's bed, I found the slippers which the daughter of Maria Theresa had not found time to put on.... For the unhappy Princess had really escaped by but a few moments the dagger of the assassins.... I saw the gilded panels of the door lying on the floor, shattered to pieces.... The wind whistled through the wide opening through which the ruffians had gained admittance. They had smashed the mirrors of the room with blows of their muskets, doubtless to punish the unoffending crystal for having reflected the features of the woman whom they had been prevented from assassinating.... And their rage had spent itself upon Her Majesty's couch. Furious at feeling it still penetrated with the warmth of the Queen's body, they pierced with the thrusts intended for her fair bosom, sheets, mattress, quilt and curtains. Shall I confess it? I was guilty of an infidelity that evening, an abuse of confidence which I should not venture to repeat in these Memoirs if the august daughter of the Cæsars were still living: I folded with care the sacred fabric on which my Sovereign's charms had reposed that night, and placed it, with all the premeditation which aggravates theft, in my pocket.

which it barely filled, so delicate and fine was it.... By what thought was I dominated when I committed this larceny? Why did my breast heave convulsively the while? I will not say; and if the readers who may one day peruse these pages can divine the thought which I was then obeying, let them remember how the great ladies of the day had helped to contribute to my impertinence, and let them consider that, in all the range of human folly, there is no mania madder than that of vanity.

Before stepping into my carriage to return to Paris, I stood still, sadly and pensively, in the centre of that immense court-yard in which, during one hundred and twenty-five years, had been drawn up, rustling with embroidery, with gold-lace, with bullion, the noble companies forming the King's Military Household; that court-yard in which lately had swarmed an eager crowd, swayed by ambition or greed.... rarely by any more generous sentiment, of which the Court, it must be confessed, was no frequent asylum....

And now it was but an immense, deserted space, with empty guard-rooms, the boxes void of sentries, the railings abandoned to all comers.... And beyond lay that imposing mass of galleries and turrets, that stone colossus which the magnificent Louis XIV. had built at vast cost, that Versailles of louis d'or, as Saint-Simon said, displaying a gloomy, sombre, silent solitude, without light, movement or life....

I knew that the Queen was awaiting my return with an impatience whose motive should not be misjudged, and I repented having prolonged by at least half-an-hour the distress in which Her Majesty was seemingly plunged. I atoned for a portion of this delay by urging on the horse which drew my cabriolet: in less than an hour I had covered the distance which separated the Château of Versailles from the Palace of the Tuilleries.

I found Marie Antoinette striding up and down her room. She was waiting for me, and desired to be alone when I returned. Madame la Princesse de Lamballe and Madame Campan, somewhat piqued I think at not being admitted to a secret which was confided to Léonard the hair-dresser, were seated in a small salon adjoining.... They cast sour glances at me as I crossed this room. Doubtless these ladies failed to see that circum-

stances occur in the course of every woman's life which she would rather confide to a hundred men than to a solitary individual of her own sex.

"There you are at last," cried the Queen, hurrying towards me, as she saw me entering her room. "Have you brought everything?"

"All that I could find, Madame."

"Show me.... show me...."

I placed before Her Majesty the articles I had collected in her apartments. She went through these with an agitation which she made no effort to conceal; and then an expression of relief suddenly came over the Queen's features, and she said, with a smile :

"You have done well, Léonard; everything is here."

"How happy is my lot, Madame, to have been favoured by destiny to fulfil your expectations!"

"You have even surpassed them, for I see trinkets among these which I did not expect to see again after the invasion of those brigands."

Marie Antoinette was no moralist. To me it seemed quite natural that the men who had forced their way that morning into Her Majesty's room had not carried away her diamonds.... It is uncommon to find two great passions reigning to an equal degree in the human breast. The assassins of the 6th of October were yielding to a desire for vengeance; and vengeance is more rarely than any other passion accompanied by a second imperious longing, and hardly ever by any form of greed.... The avenging mind is too much absorbed in its object not to be disinterested.

The Queen told me of the reception that had greeted her at the Hotel de Ville, whither Their Majesties had been taken on their arrival from Versailles. She spoke very warmly in praise of M. Bailly. "Patriot though he be," said Her Majesty, "I believe him to be an honest man. He repeated with much feeling to the people crowded beneath the windows of the Hotel de Ville that the King was always happy to find himself among the inhabitants of Paris. 'And he has great confidence in them,' I added, eagerly. They cried, 'God save the King!' Whereupon M. Bailly said, 'And God save the Queen, too!' The

people repeated, ‘God save the Queen!’ Léonard, it is something to have an honest man for Mayor of Paris.”

It was a melancholy review which the King held on the 7th, 8th and 9th of September, of the followers who still remained to him in the Palace of the Tuileries. Of the Military Household and the members of the Court of Versailles there remained but a few scattered remnants. Many of the body-guards had been killed; others, grievously wounded, reappeared nevertheless with their arm in a sling or their head bandaged, to give a proof of their devotion to the King and his illustrious consort. But the officers of the Crown, put to flight on the 5th and 6th by the cries of the hordes from Paris like timid partridges by the baying of a pack of hounds, were hurrying towards the banks of the Rhine. At that critical time, when the Throne seemed on the point of crumbling to pieces, there were but few to be found who had the courage to remain by their Sovereign. . . . All had turned towards the mustering-places of the emigration, and protested their devotion to Louis XVI.’s cause what time they forsook his person. A strange sort of protectors, who flew to proclaim afar the principle of legitimism while leaving the legitimate Sovereign exposed to all the attacks of his enemies.

Those affections which had seemed the closest were revealed in their true nature at the first shock of the revolutionary thunder. Personal inclination and personal interest, dignified with the fine name of loyalty, had thrown aside the mask. . . . Madame de Polignac herself was but little concerned for the fate of the Queen from the moment that the Comte d’Artois had quitted French territory: her departure coincided almost hour for hour with that of His fugitive Royal Highness. This woman, whose tact and good fortune had enriched almost every member of her family, hoisted a mournful ensign over her actions, and seemed to be following Charles of France much as a provincial actress follows a sub-lieutenant who is moved from one garrison to another. A vain endeavour has since been made to show that Marie Antoinette herself had commanded her favourite to join the emigrants. Her Majesty did actually give such a command later to her devoted retainers, and to Madame la Princesse de Lamballe herself; but we now know positively that the Queen was not favourably disposed towards the principle of

emigration until the end of the year 1791, when she thought that an advance-guard of the French nobility was certainly about to lead an army of foreign legions against France. But before that time, she attached no idea beyond that of cowardice to this precipitate flight, which was capable of no reasonable explanation save that of fear.

While the King and Queen were grieving over the ingratitude and desertion of certain of their creatures, really faithful servants who had been too light-heartedly dismissed, or persons punished too severely, were generously returning to the side of the abandoned Throne, and giving assurances of a devotion that could no longer hope for reward.

Among this number was the good Rose Bertin, to whom Marie Antoinette had forbidden the door of her apartments because of a failure in business which had obviously resulted from a too exclusive zeal for Her Majesty's service. Mademoiselle Bertin hurried to the Tuileries as soon as the Queen was installed there, and, let me hasten to add in praise of this worthy demoiselle, so soon as she was able to return to her Royal mistress without the latter's position being such as to permit her to suspect that the milliner was thinking of asking her for pecuniary assistance. Marie Antoinette confessed to Mademoiselle Rose with a good grace that she had been too quick to lend an ear to the reports of her enemies, and gave her her hand, which the excellent creature kissed with rapture and covered with her tears.... I was a witness of this pathetic reconciliation, and congratulated myself on having contributed to it by announcing to my friend of twenty years' standing that her return to the Queen's service would be favourably received.

At about this same time I became the intermediary in a still more generous action on the part of a woman whom the Queen had treated with severity, and who, in forgetting her resentment, made noble atonement for the faults of her life.

I had just returned home, when I heard a carriage stop before my door. A moment later and my bell was rung sharply, and there entered the room.... Madame Du Barry. The countess must have perceived the expression of great surprise on my features. My credit with the Queen, my ardent zeal for everything connected with her service, my natural seconding of her

likes and dislikes, my necessary reserve with those whom she did not honour with her favour, all these had made it my duty, during the past fifteen years, to avoid any contact with the ex-Favourite. And I had accustomed myself to believe that our former relations, although these had been carried pretty far (as witness the experiment in Oriental hygiene), had left but a pale and distant remembrance in Jeanne Vaubernier's mind.

I knew not therefore to what to attribute this lady's visit, at a late hour, and under somewhat mysterious circumstances.... A thousand phantastic ideas shot in a few seconds through my mind. The countess had barely attained her thirty-ninth year: she was still so fresh, so plump, so pretty. Could she have become so much at a loss for a lover that she felt constrained to return to a chapter of ancient history of which I had been the chance hero? But the Revolution had not so entirely dispersed Madame Du Barry's lovers but that there still remained among her intimates a Prince de Beauvau\* and a Duc de Cossé-Brissac, † both of whom paid her assiduous court in her delicious solitude at Luciennes: the first with his feet outstretched on her hearth, the second in still more intimate fashion, so it was said. For a moment I thought that, in the course of a less sentimental intrigue, the ex-Favourite might have encountered some ill-bred swain who had repeated that attempt of her brother-in-law, the Comte Jean, which had obliged her, long ago, to have recourse to my restoring care.

To tell truth, for one who had become quite as perfect a courtier as any of those who were commencing to perform doughty deeds of valour (in words) at Coblenz, I was indulging in conjectures worthy of a common hair-dresser.... I was seeking a motive for Madame Du Barry's visit among the vices, whereas that lady had been led to call upon me in the pursuit of the most sublime of all virtues, forgiveness of injuries.... My error did not last long, for the countess was quick in coming to the point.

\* Charles Juste Duc de Beauvau and a Marshal of France, 1720—1793, is probably the noble referred to. He had served at the siege of Prague and in the Spanish campaign of 1752, and was a member of both the French and the Della Crusca Academies. His advanced age would have warranted his favourite attitude as described by the author.

† Louis Hercule Timoléon de Cossé, Duc de Brissac, was 55 years of age at this time and Colonel of the Cent-Suisses. He was massacred in September 1792.

"Monsieur Léonard," said she, "you enjoy the Queen's confidence, and you deserve it. I beg you to repeat to Her Majesty what you are about to hear."

"With pleasure, madame la comtesse, if that communication is not likely to offend Her Majesty."

"No, it will not offend her, and, if the Queen be angry with anyone, it will not be with me."

"Pray continue, madame la comtesse."

"I was still young when Marie Antoinette arrived at Versailles. I shared the bed of the Sovereign, while she shared only the Dauphin's. Feeling that I could, with advantage to myself, raise altar against altar, I spared Her Royal Highness no ill office.... Once she was Queen, it lay in her power to crush me. The august lady was too indulgent when she contented herself with banishing me from the Court: perhaps she was a little less so when she parted me from the Duc d'Aiguillon, whom at that time I loved. But I am able to recognize this day, in all sincerity of soul, that Their Majesties treated me with clemency.... for I had outraged the Queen; and the feeling which I retain amid my almost complete forgetfulness of my former evil life is one of the keenest gratitude.... And so I have come to ask you, Monsieur Léonard, not only to express this feeling to the Queen but to prove it to her. Tell Her Majesty, I beg you, that no one in the world feels for her more deeply in the affliction that has befallen her; tell her that my fortune is a large one, and that she is free to dispose of all I possess; tell her moreover that no sacrifice, no danger shall stand in the way, if I may hope for the happiness of being able to serve Their Majesties, and that I shall impatiently await the opportunity to lay all my devotion and all my wealth at their feet."

"Your conduct is noble, madame la comtesse...."

"It is just, Monsieur Léonard: I have not one louis d'or but comes from Louis XV., not one but which should be bestowed in serving his grand-children in their distress."

"How happy and at the same time how proud am I, madame in the glad message that you deign to confide to me! Tomorrow the Queen shall know your generous intentions, and I shall omit nothing that will make Her Majesty worthily appreciate the true magnanimity of your conduct."

Madame Du Barry thanked me, and kissed me with quite democratic affection, which in some sort recalled her former favours at Luciennes and Versailles. Nor should I have been sorry to behold these repeated in 1789, so handsome was the ex-Favourite still, and so seductive; but nothing came of it. After a moment of remunerative effusion, the countess wrapped herself in her dignity and bade me farewell, urging me once more to lay all her devotion, all her ardour at the Queen's feet, and repeating that she would never forget the honour that had been hers in living so many years beside the Throne, nor the infinite clemency which the King and Queen had shown her after her very evil conduct.... In truth, I believe that Madame Du Barry's stay, however short, at the convent of Pont-aux-Dames had turned her thoughts towards religion; and yet I had reason to know that she had not yet deposited all her desires at the feet of the Cross.

I did not delay the next morning to tell the Queen of the strange visit which I had received the evening before. A faint smile passed over Her Majesty's lips, and she said to me, sadly:

"Nothing surprises me now; we seem to live in days when characters are being transformed.... All that was wanting to complete the series of inconceivable contrasts presented to my eyes during the past six months was that I should be able to place against Madame de Polignac's desertion Madame Du Barry's repentance.... It is really very curious: on the one hand, innumerable favours and acts of prodigality, which the red book will perhaps soon reveal to the nation, repaid with an abandonment carried out with the greatest want of tact.... On the other, banishment, imprisonment (for a convent is a prison in all but name), followed by protestations of devotion and offers of service which go so far as to sacrifice a fortune that would actually enable the former Favourite to live abroad, surrounded with all the consideration which wealth never fails to command...."

"Madame Du Barry's offer will surely surprise nobody. It is only a just return for the grave offences of which she was guilty against Your Majesty."

"And for which My Majesty took care to be passably well revenged, Léonard.... The countess and I were quits...."

"And then," I resumed, gaily, "is it not a distinctive feature in the characters of women of loose morals that they are generous and prone to forget the ill one has done them and to remember kindnesses?"

"They are not all thus, Léonard.... Ah! the Duchesse de Polignac....! What ingratitude is hers, and how bitter it is to recall certain incidents in our friendship!.... For I had raised her to my level: what am I saying? I had prostrated my sovereign greatness at that woman's feet...."

"At her feet, Madame?"

"Yes, Léonard, at her feet, and the thought of it kills me.... Listen, listen: you cannot have forgotten the difference that arose between myself and the duchess on the subject of the portfolio for War which was given, at her solicitation, to Marshal de Sécur,\* a man of such feeble health as utterly to unfit him for that important office.... I reproached Madame Jules, perhaps somewhat warmly, for her insistence. I had forced her selection upon the King against his will, and I had received more than one rough remonstrance from His Majesty.... The duchess's pride was suddenly aroused, and she went so far as to offer to restore all the benefits she had received at my hands.... The way to humble this overweening creature would perhaps have been to accept her offer; but I loved Madame de Polignac too well, and my heart was incapable of such severity. Far from that, I suddenly descended from my tone of reproach to one of regret and gentleness. She saw the tears falling from my eyes, and she had the courage to take a haughty advantage of the weakness of which she but too well recognized the forlorn character.... The more I begged my friend to forgive the wrong I had done her, the more she overwhelmed me with that icy respect which I had forbidden her ever to show me, persisting in her determination to restore to me titles, honours, fortune and even her husband's post at Court, saying that the latter would not disown her action when he learnt that she had the misfortune to lose my confidence.... Thereupon, seized by I know not what vestige of affection, I felt my tears burst from my eyes.... and I fell at the duchess's feet..., yes, Léonard,

\*Philippe, Marquis de Sécur, 1724—1801. He was Minister of War from 1780 to 1787.

I fell at her feet, and without any reserve, perhaps I should say without any restraint, expressed to her my regret at having offended her, adding all that could be prompted by the tenderest friendship.... This was the price of my pardon. Judge now, Léonard, of the contrast formed in my mind between the conduct of this woman, whom I saw flying before the first symptom of danger, which was, I believe, but a mere pretext for her departure, and of that other woman, whom I have persecuted, and who now makes me the offer, through you, of all she possesses on earth."

"I confess, Madame," said I, with feeling, "that the parallel must be a painful one to you."

"You must go to Luciennes to-morrow. Tell Madame Du Barry from me that I am most sensible of her offers, and that, to prove to her how highly I value them, I may perhaps one day avail myself of them."

I shall have occasion to speak later of the assistance which Madame Du Barry, during her stay in England, gave to the emigrants with lavish hands: I was more than once not only the witness, but the instrument, of her benevolence.... I return to the year 1790, and in writing of this year I will pass over incidents which are too well-known, too barren of unpublished details, for me to linger upon in this place.

It was towards the end of this year that the Queen became convinced of the necessity to win over several members of the National Assembly who were persistent in their attacks upon the Court, and notably Mirabeau. But not only was the difficult enterprise of persuading so independent a mind beyond the capacity both of the politicians of the Council and of the feeble courtiers with whom Their Majesties were unhappily surrounded, but it was generally rumoured that the king of the constituent body was only seeking to undermine the Throne filled by the eldest descendants of Henry IV. in order to raise upon its ruins the throne of the House of Orleans. Although nothing was known for certain concerning these relations, the Queen had received through Madame Campan, Mademoiselle Bertin and myself information as to the intimacy reigning between the Duc d'Orléans and Mirabeau which was sufficient to alarm her. His Serene Highness had never before been known

to give the count any signs of friendship. Their meetings could therefore have none but a political significance.... How to penetrate the mystery that enveloped the frequent interviews between the Duke and Maury's great adversary?.... The Queen decided that I should be entrusted with the task of throwing light upon these furtive conferences.

I soon discovered that as soon as he had ceased to thunder from the tribune, Mirabeau would hurry through his dinner in order to repair to some isolated building, one day in the Faubourg Saint-Antoine, another day at Belleville and a third outside the Barrière du Roule. This did not at first afford me any clue; but a more assiduous, in other words a better remunerated, observation enabled the agents whom I employed to learn that every evening, between light and dark, M. le Duc d'Orléans left his palace and always set out in the same direction as M. le Comte de Mirabeau. This knowledge soon led to the certainty that these two personages repaired to the self-same house, and I was thenceforth able to judge how the land lay.

But my secret investigations came to an end at the door of this fatal house, or rather of those different houses in which our conspirators alternated their rendezvous. Vainly did I myself set to work to interrogate the servants of the Prince or of the great orator, whom I carried off to a tavern adjoining the mysterious house, after having entered the latter upon divers pretexts and under divers disguises. All I received for my pains was a terrible distaste for the abominable liquor which I was compelled to swallow almost as recklessly as I paid for it, lest I should rouse the suspicions of those menials.

One night, alas! I received somewhat more than I bargained for. I had enticed a tall, fat footman belonging to Mirabeau to a wine-house at la Courtile; I had long had my eye upon this man, whom I knew to be one of his master's favourite servants and better informed than his fellows concerning the count's private life. The lackey-confidant was a toper, and I easily succeeded in fuddling him; but the rogue was cunning, and no amount of wine would make him lose his head.... My frequent and insidious questions, which became the less prudent as I considered my man to be the more declareted, aroused his suspicions. He ended by taking me for what I was, a secret

agent; and before I had time to explain to him that I at least held my instructions from high quarters, or to strengthen my means of seduction with a handful of louis, the brute let fly at my left eye, giving me an untimely view of the most beautiful firework of stars that man had ever beheld.

The gods love vengeance, and so do hair-dressers, when they have an income of some fifty thousand livres a year... Pressing my handkerchief to my eye, which had swollen to the size of an egg, I reflected that I could not well demand satisfaction from a lackey at the sword's point. On the other hand, when I compared his Herculean fists with my hand, so renowned for its lightness, I was not tempted to challenge him to a duel à l'*anglaise*.... I assumed an air, however, of having decided upon this latter course, and you shall see for what reason. I beckoned to my colossal adversary to join me in the lists, by the light of the stars, in a spacious arbour that lay behind the tavern. He followed me without hesitating.... As I crossed the threshold, I was observed by my two satellites; whom I had kept close at hand since I first commenced to make these investigations. They guessed what had happened from the sight of my handkerchief covered with blood, and quickly taking another road, they reached the arbour at the same moment that I did.

"You are rash, my cock-sparrow," said the big funkey, insolently, "to come and try fisticuffs with me. You would have done better to take that blow in the eye rather than get yourself smashed to pieces, as you shortly will be."

"On the contrary," I replied, through my clenched teeth; "I mean to repay you that blow with interest...."

"That's what we shall see...."

"And quickly," exclaimed one of my men, springing with his mate through a vine-clad fence.

Suddenly a pair of stout cudgels beat upon my enemy's shoulders the liveliest of *allegretti*, which was continued, in spite of the poor devil's cries, until he fell beneath this hail of fustigation.... When we saw the tavern-keeper and his waiters running up to the field of battle, candles in hand, we sprang, I and my avenging ministers, over a hedge which closed the garden at its further end, and found ourselves in the open fields, protected by the darkness.

I ran on for a few minutes, to escape any who might be following me, and then my strength failed me, and I was obliged to lie down upon a little grass mound. My eye had swollen to a monstrous size, and gave me great pain. However, my sight was not injured, and I hoped to escape with what our neighbours across the Channel call "a black eye." An adjacent fountain enabled me to lave it in its refreshing, if not exactly healing, flow. I soaked a piece torn from my handkerchief in the water, and applied it by way of poultice to the injured part; of what remained I made a bandage. A sorry, blindfold Cupid, I was taken home in a coach which we found near the barrier.

I had never before experienced in such painful fashion the danger of playing at observant monarchism. When I was safe in bed, after sponging my eye with a curative fluid, I decided thenceforth to rely upon less perilous and more effective means... I knew that M. de Genlis, the Prince's favourite, was in the secret of his consultations with Mirabeau. I knew, moreover, that the said gentleman loved wenches and orgies, and that when once plunged in a two-fold intoxication, he was easily made to talk, although ordinarily in the matter of intrigue he was as silent as a Trappist.... But it would be necessary to set on this libertine's track a woman who would have both the tact to play upon his jaded senses and entangle him into longing for a private interview with her, and the wit to make him tell what I wanted to know. These qualifications were not to be found in an ordinary courtesan. What I wanted was a shrewd girl, accustomed to surmount a thousand obstacles in the road to fortune; some neat-footed La Motte, at once wanton, arch and insinuating.... After casting about in my mind, I thought I had found the right woman.

The porter\* of my house had a very pretty daughter, whom I protected. The poor child had scarcely completed her seventeenth year when she betrayed so strong a desire to be pleasing in the eyes of her father's employer, showing such readiness herself to bring me my letters and newspapers (which she hid

\* The *concierge*, an invention of the revolutionary aristocracy, had not yet come into existence; there were only porters and Suisses. Léonard, in spite of the luxury of his establishment, would not have had the impudence to post a Suisse at the door of the house of which he was the principal tenant.

whenever I sent my servants to ask for them, so as to have an excuse to bring them up to me) and making such play with those soft eyes of hers, that I had no choice left me but to take her virginity, which was offered to me with such charming persistency.... This was all very well; but we ceased to be of one mind when my little friend gave an inkling of her desire to live with me. I replied what M. le Comte d'Artois had one day replied to Mademoiselle Contat, "My dear child, I don't know how to 'live.'" I added that all I could do for her was to procure her an engagement in the French company at the Théâtre de Monsieur, where, in my capacity of proprietor of the house, I could exercise my influence in her favour.

Lucette, as my young portress was called, wept bitterly at first. A young girl of seventeen who wants to "live with" some one, is always obeying the dictates of her heart; speculation rarely comes into play till five years later. However, she ended by listening to reason; I presented her to the managers of the Théâtre Feydeau,\* where she was at once received as a pupil; and within a year of her admission, I learnt that, though still but a very indifferent actress, she had become a great mistress in the art of love.

It was Lucette whom I determined to employ to vanquish M. de Genlis and wheedle from him the secret of the interviews between M. le Duc d'Orléans and Mirabeau. The young actress had plenty of experience. She knew how to make the most of that feminine prattle which is readily taken for wit, when accompanied by a well-timed wink or a pursing of the lips that appears to denote a thought. But one important point must be elucidated before investing Lucette with my confidence, and that was to discover whether she had up to that time escaped the quest of de Genlis, who knew the actresses of Paris as a canoness ought to know the beads of her rosary.

I wrote a line to my protégée and begged her to come and dine with me, not venturing to run the risk of a supper. Lucette was delighted to come, and running in without being announced, entered my study humming a refrain from *Le Marquis de Tulipano*, an Italian opera which had become the rage.

"Have you become a *prima donna*, my dear Lucette?" I  
\*The Théâtre de Monsieur, it will be remembered, was in the Rue Feydeau.

asked, after returning the kiss which she gave me by way of opening fire.

"A *prima donna*, certainly, my dear master, if you mean it in a certain sense."

"Aha ! I see you have improved yourself."

"So much the more glory to you, O illustrious Léonard ! It would be a rare sight to see one of your pupils on the high road to fortune without spreading wide the wings of pleasure."

"Yes, Lucette ; but beware of excess.... if you tire pleasure's wings, she soon droops her feathers."

"*Basta !*.... That is very well for you men, who reproach us with indulging the whims of coquetry, and who yourselves turn love into a whim a hundred times more fitful than the most ephemeral of ours.... The desires of your sorry sex resemble a sudden shower in spring ; whereas ours are like a perpetual autumn rainfall...."

"Good, I can see that you will perfectly suit the mission on which I propose to send you. But first, Lucette, come and sit down here, and tell me if, in the career in which you have so speedily acquired such wealth of transcendental logic, you have by chance happened not to meet the Comte de Genlis...."

"You mean to say, no doubt, Monsieur Léonard," replied Lucette with a certain dignity, "Have you not by chance happened to meet the Comte de Genlis?'"

"Yes, that is what I meant," I replied, seeing that the young actress was rightly piqued at the manner of my question.

"Well and good.... No, I have never met the count in the course of a career into which I do not indiscriminately admit every fellow-traveller. All I know of him is that he is a debauchee and.... what his kind deserve to be."

"Well then, granting that he is what you suggest, would you be willing to give him one more opportunity to revenge himself?"

"That depends.... Whom should I be obliging ?"

"Me, Lucette...."

"That decides the matter, and I do not even make any conditions ...."

"Ah, but I shall make some for you.... If you succeed, you shall have five hundred louis."

"If they come from you, Monsieur Léonard, I won't have them. I will do you none but gratis services."

"No, my child; by making a conquest of the Comte de Genlis you will be serving the Court, and the Court will pay."

"That is different; if I am to act as a functionary of State . . . ."

"Just so," said I, bursting into a laugh.

"Then that is settled. Only, my dear master, I will only consent to receive your political instructions at a little supper . . . ."

"Lucette, Lucette, you want earnest-money . . . ."

"I want to prove to you, Léonard, that the fires of a first love can never be extinguished . . . ."

"That speech is too amiable, and you are too pretty, Lucette, for me to decline the form of investiture which you propose. . . . After dinner we shall go to the play, and I will bring you back to-night . . . . But your father . . . ."

"Ha, ha! I forgot my father . . . . We must slip by the porter's lodge and respect the paternal morals . . . ."

Lucette was in such a joyous mood, and so provoked me throughout the evening, that by the time we had returned home and slipped past the porter's lodge, I felt a keen desire for the signature of her commission, as she called it. She was fond of champagne, and I poured her out glass after glass, the more as each sparkling bumper summoned up fresh brilliant and original coruscations from her mind . . . . Amid this firework of the imagination, I asked Lucette how she proposed to set to work to make the acquaintance of the Comte de Genlis.

"I have no idea, upon my word, and I am not going to think about it at present . . . . I have very different things to think of, in faith . . . ."

"But nevertheless, my dear child, you must have sketched out some little plan in your mind."

"I? Not the least in the world . . . . the unexpected, dear master . . . . the unexpected, that is the great thing . . . . Imagination is wearied and sent to sleep with long meditation . . . . Personally speaking, I am never so brilliant as when I act on the spur of the moment . . . . Be easy, illustrious Léonard. Within a week I will bring you all the ideas on politics which the Comte de Genlis has in his head, from *Pater* to *Amen*."

With which words Lucette threw her napkin on the table, rose from her chair, and not very steady on her legs, dropped on to my sofa in the most provoking attitude . . . . My pupil was

a devil, but a very charming devil, and I was very nearly seized with a recrudescence of love.... I succeeded, however, in saving myself from such an absurdity.

"Mark me well, Léonard," she resumed, "before this day week, under these same conditions, you shall see me here again. The Comte de Genlis' secrets shall be yours .... and I shall be yours.... and I shall not have been his," added Lucette, boastfully raising her voice.

"Ah! what nonsense!"

"You need not give any exclamations. I shall bring proof of what I say."

That was for the moment Lucette's last word.

## CHAPTER II

Lucette returns—A pseudo-Milady—A tête-à-tête at le Raincy—The Comte de Genlis' gallant intentions—A certificate of fidelity—Lucette's report—Mirabeau an Orleanist—He wavers in his adherence to the cause—An outline of the letter—I give Marie Antoinette an account of Lucette's mission—And discuss with her the chances of a defection on the part of Mirabeau—The Queen sends me to the tribune to sound him as to his intentions.

Lucette was a day ahead of her promise. She stepped into my room twenty-four hours before the appointed time.

"What!" I exclaimed, in surprise. "Already!"

"My dear master, you gave me twice as much time as I wanted, had I cared to press for the results. Our good Comte de Genlis is quite the most malleable creature that God ever made; and I am not astonished that his wife has made herself rather more of a man than he is...."

"My pretty Lucette, according to your promise you were to know nothing of that...."

"Ah! as far as my promise is concerned, I have uncontrovertible evidence...."

"How do you mean?"

"I promised proofs, and I have them in writing...."

"Let me see...."

"We will proceed in order, if you please."

Lucette sat down by my side on the sofa; and passing her arm round my neck with a familiarity against which I had no wish to protest, she thus began her narrative:

"One of the chorus-girls at our theatre is the more or less real daughter of a third or fourth scullion in M. le Duc d'Orléans' kitchen. This girl is under certain obligations to me, and through her I was able to establish intelligences with His Serene Highness's palace. Knowing that the Comte de Genlis often went to Le Raincy, I bribed the scullion to inform me when

next the Prince's favorite was about to make that journey. I had not long to wait: barely two days had elapsed when I was visited by my obliging chorister, who told me that M. de Genlis had that very moment departed for Le Raincy, where he was to spend two days hunting with M. le Duc d'Orléans. I had had the topography of the place carefully described to me; I knew the summer-house which the count inhabited; and I had been instructed how to reach it without searching or difficulty.

"At the fall of dusk I set out from Paris in an elegant hired carriage, drawn by four horses; two of my cronies at the theatre, who had formerly been jockeys, dressed themselves as English postilions and undertook to drive my carriage for me; while two others, in fancy livery, took their places on the coachman's box.

"Pelissier, of our theatre, had given me two lessons in the British gibberish; and carefully clad as an English traveller, I ensconced myself in my berline, and ordered my stage postillions to deposit me, as though we had lost our way, beneath the windows of the illustrious Genlis' summer-house, after first splashing the carriage to the roof with mud.

"All went well and as I had wished. The carriage stopped quite close to the château; the more intelligent of my two lackeys (the one who had the more frequently enjoyed the opportunity of walking on to our stage and saying, 'Madame la marquise, the carriage waits') roused the gate-keeper, and asked for word of M. le Comte de Genlis, on behalf of Lady Barrisson .... The rogue apparently acquitted himself well of his mission. In less than ten minutes he returned with the count himself, who had come to offer the hospitality of his house to a noble Englishwoman, whom the false lackey had described as young and beautiful.

"By the light of the torches carried by two footmen in the full livery of the House of Orleans, Genlis was able to convince, himself, I suppose, that my servant had spoken without exaggeration, for he hastened to offer me his hand and assist me from my carriage ....

"'Truly, milady,' said he as we reached the summer-house, 'I am under a great obligation to fortune, or rather to the darkness which, by causing you to lose the high-road, has brought

you to Le Raincy.... It is one of those charming adventures which the countess, my wife, describes somewhat less happily, I think, in her romances.'

"Oh! I knew that Madame le Comtesse de Genlis composes comfortably lovely romances.\*

"Yes, milady, but they are fables, while my lucky star to-night has procured me the most agreeable reality.'

"I am sensibly touched, monsieur le comte, with your charming compliment....'

We reached a small drawing-room on the ground-floor, elegantly furnished, and leading out upon a lawn covered with flowers, whose sweet perfume was wafted in upon us through the open glass-doors.

"Zounds, milady, I congratulate myself upon being able to devote myself quite entirely to-night to the hospitality which you permit me to show you,' exclaimed the count gallantly, leading me to a downy seat which could doubtless have told some pretty tales, had some fairy gifted it with the volubility of Crébillon's sofa...." (Observe that Lucette was well-read.) †

"The Prince,' continued my host, 'will not be here till to-morrow afternoon, and from now till then all my time is at your grace's disposal.'

"I should be in a great affliction if I were to cause you, monsieur le comte, so to disturb yourself.... I had the intention to leave to-morrow in the early morning.'

"I shall do all I can to prevent you, milady. This château is worth visiting in every portion of it, and the ladies of your country love pretty things.'

I made the count a most graceful little English courtesy, and the conversation continued in these tones of compliment until the arrival of supper, which was shortly served. You can picture to yourself, my dear protector, that the tête-à-tête, of

\*The translator has endeavoured to give a faithful rendering of the "British gibberish."

†*Le Sopha*, published in 1745, is perhaps the most popular of the gallant books of the 18th century. Its author, Claude Prosper Jolyot de Crébillon, 1707—1777, generally known as Crébillon fils, was a man whose life belied his works, which are exceedingly licentious. He lived, and on the best of terms, with his father, Crébillon the elder, a writer of plays, a member of the Academy, and a man of a morose, proud, cynical character, not, perhaps, utterly without resemblance to that of Dr. Johnson, his contemporary.

which I received a silent token in seeing the table only laid for two, caused no great alarm to my Britannic prudery. The count observed the resignation with which I accepted this little private supper-party, and I could see that he was cherishing hopes of the most fatuous character.

"I artfully turned the conversation upon M. le Duc d'Orléans. I praised his appearance, his wit, his affability, his benevolence. 'His Serene Highness is the idol of the people,' replied M. de Genlis, charmed to hear the praises of the Prince sung by a person belonging to that nation which His Highness hoped to bring round to his interest ....

"Monseigneur le Duc d'Orléans is very much the friend of our Prince of Wales,\* and I have heard His Royal Highness say that the French nation would be in a great state of satisfaction to have for their king this first Prince of the Blood."

"Hush, milady; in these days walls have ears," said M. de Genlis, in a whisper. "True, the nation calls for M. le Duc d'Orléans: the elder branch of the Bourbons is crumbling to dust, and Louis XVI., with his evident bad faith, is giving the Assembly more and more ground for discontent."

"In England we are already looking to his deposition."

"We are thinking of it in France," said M. de Genlis, pertinently, "and if Monseigneur were not so modest, so disinterested...."

"I have been told that the great orator, Mirabeau, is working in your Constituent Parliament for M. le Duc d'Orléans."

"Not in the Assembly, as yet: the apple is not yet ripe.... only Mirabeau is preparing the way, in conjunction with us.... and when the time comes...."

"I understand...."

"But it will be a costly matter: that man is insatiable.... You are not drinking, milady: though my champagne has a certain quality.... the Prince, who has a taste for it, always chooses it for me."

\*Afterwards George IV. The two worthies were, in fact, great friends. It must be remembered that the English royal family, who themselves only occupied the throne despite the protest of Henry IX., had naturally not the same devotion to the hereditary principle which distinguished Louis XIV. when he refused to acknowledge the title of William and Mary. To the Georges, so long as there was a king in France, it mattered little which king.



"The count, whose flashing looks revealed intentions very far removed from politics, had several times approached his chair to mine, as though to speak to me with greater mystery.... In a little while he suddenly changed the subject of conversation, and spoke to me of my beauty, which he detailed to me with a gallantry full of delicacy, although his knee displayed less of the latter quality in the ardour with which it pressed against mine.... The champagne-bottle continued ceaselessly to present its sparkling neck above my glass, although I spared myself in an inverse ratio to M. de Genlis, who seemed anxious to bring himself to that condition of exaltation in which the conquest of a woman is forced, while reason is acquitted of complicity in the conquest. Soon guessing his intention, I allowed him to go far enough to be drawn into an intrigue, but not to give him the hope of a speedy triumph.... He kissed my hand several times, risked an avowal, held my knee captive between his, and found me indulgent and almost encouraging; but when the confidant of M. le Duc d'Orléans attempted to go further than this, I armed myself with a somewhat haughty severity, which gave him to understand that my surrender, if it was to take place at all, would be the price of a more gradual and less insistent courtship. Such was the idea which I wished to convey to my host, for it suited my purpose that he should come and see me in Paris. He fully entered into my proposal to hire a fine apartment in a hotel for three days, and then to set out for the waters, by which time I should have learnt from the count all that we wanted to know about his master's interviews with Mirabeau.

"M. de Genlis felt that for that night he would have to restrain himself within the limits of chivalrous hospitality. There was a woman there to undress me. The next morning she came to offer me her assistance; and the count, after showing me over the château, allowed me to depart, but not before respectfully begging my permission to pay me a visit.... I gave him as my address the Hôtel des Ambassadeurs, and departed.

"The next day, Genlis was with me by mid-day. I offered him a dish of tea, which he eagerly accepted. The scene of gallantry of Le Raincy was renewed, and I took advantage of it to elicit fresh details of Mirabeau's plan of an Orleanist

monarchy. In the evening, the count came and offered me the use of his box at the Opera. I knew too well to refuse, and I was admitted still deeper into the secrets of the conspiracy, at the price of a semi-avowal which seemed to cost my modesty a great effort. On the morrow I informed my admirer that I was leaving that night for the waters at Néris.\* The count, madly enamoured, swore to follow me there; and I pretended to be flattered by his decision.

"But before then, fair lady, you will receive more than one letter describing in characters of fire the feelings which I bear in my heart."

"Ah well, we shall see, monsieur le comte."

"A defiance, charming lady! you will find a letter awaiting you at the first post."

"That would be too pretty...."

"Yet nothing is more serious than my love."

"As serious as all the loves of Frenchmen."

"Do not complain of that, milady: I have often heard ladies from your country deplore excess in the opposite direction."

"I did actually leave that evening .... to return home to the Rue du Faubourg-Montmartre, and yesterday an express, which I had dispatched to the post-office at Villejuif, † brought me this letter. It is the proof I promised you, unbeliever: read it, and see if I have not kept my promise faithfully:

"You have left me, adorable lady. You carry away with you my heart, and you leave me the martyrdom of a love reduced to a diet of hope. But at least you have permitted me to retain this one consolation, this hope which will carry me on its wings to the place where I am to see you once again.... Ah! how I curse the wretched cares which keep me in Paris for twenty-four hours longer: they will seem as twenty-four ages, and yet it is but one single revolution of the sun which separates me from you!.... Until the happy moment when I shall rejoin you, most idolized of women, I shall dream of nothing but the leafy shades of Néris, and the

\* Néris-les-Bains, a small town in Bourbonnais, containing several warm-water springs.

† Eight kilometres south of Paris, and the first posting-station on the Bourbonnais road.

grassy slopes which they conceal.... Alas! while thinking of them, I sigh like the saddest of lovers. Shall I ever attain that moment of good fortune which extinguishes the sighs of the lover who is most blessed!'"

"And now," said Lucette, drawing another document from her paper, "here is the detailed report of what I have learnt concerning the relations between M. le Duc d'Orléans and Mirabeau. I raised myself to the level of the mission with which you honoured me in the name of the Court, and you see I have set to work after the fashion of a statesman; the Chevalier d'Éon, of diplomatic memory, could not, I flatter myself, have done better.... except in the matter of style, which may perhaps here and there remind you of the young lady of the boards...."

"Really, my dear Lucette," I exclaimed with fervour, "you are a woman beyond price. But withal you are so pretty a woman, so seductive, and above all so delicate in your conduct towards myself, that my first homage must be paid to your charms: your talent shall only receive the second."

"Oh, but Léonard, can you picture that excellent Comte de Genlis posting along the road to Néris, to rejoin Lady Barnesson!"

"You have well earned your five hundred louis, and you can indulge yourself besides in a luxury of conscience surpassing the ordinary."

"A luxury with which I love to adorn myself for you, the object of my first love, that love which never dies out of one's heart, and whose reflections recur throughout one's life."

"Provided they are not sought for too often," replied I, with a somewhat sceptical smile.

"You deserve not to find them to-night," retorted the actress, a little poutingly.

It was not till the next day was well advanced that I could find an occasion to read what Lucette called her report. It contained some disorder, some frivolity; but all the facts were noted down in full detail, and the whole tendency of the conspiracy was easily to be gathered from it.

Mirabeau seemed to be convinced that Louis XVI. had never



forsaken the idea of flight, and that only his timidity delayed its execution. By this means the King hoped to save the Throne of Henry IV., and to annul, from the midst of a camp formed with the assistance of foreign armies, the labours of the National Assembly towards reform. His Majesty's intention at that time was to restore the old order of things, purely and simply, and to "concede" fresh powers to the parliaments. Next year, this plan was modified, and Louis XVI. adopted the idea of granting a Constitution.\* Now the departure of the King was the event which, in Mirabeau's eyes, ought to serve as a motive for a change of dynasty. The forsaken Throne of the Tuileries would be regarded as vacant; Mirabeau would proclaim it as such in the Constituent Assembly; and he would forthwith propose the Prince who had associated himself with the French Revolution, and who consequently deserved to be called upon to direct it.

This plan, founded upon the presumed attempt at escape of Louis XVI. would infallibly have been carried out, since this escape was, in Mirabeau's opinion, more than probable.† But in order to reap the fruits of such an occurrence, it was necessary for Philippe d'Orléans to develop an amount of energy sufficient to satisfy the French Demosthenes, and to contribute to the building up of his throne. It was of no avail for him to content himself with being declared king, without first proving that he had the courage to become so. Unfortunately for Philippe d'Orléans, Mirabeau soon perceived that he was risking his head in a cause in which the careless and incapable Pretender § might well think fit to abandon him to the loss of that important stake. He expressed his disgust to the Prince's confidants, and plainly declared to them that he would not hesitate to throw on one side the potter's clay which he was trying to mould into a king.... The golden tribute was increased, but proved unable to warm the chilled zeal of the impetuous tribune.

\* This Constitution was drafted by Mirabeau, after his reconciliation with the Court, and probably served as a model for Louis XVIII.'s Charter of 1814.

† The attempted flight took place on the 21st of June, 1791, less than three months after Mirabeau's death.

§ "A most signal failure, this young Prince! The stuff prematurely burnt out of him: little left but foul smoke and ashes of expiring sensualities: what might have been Thought, Insight, and even Conduct, gone now, or fast going,—to confused darkness, broken by bewildering dazzling; to obstreperous crotchetts; to activities which you may call semi-delirious, or even semi-galvanic!"—CARLYLE.

Thenceforth the collection of political creatures, who had thitherto been known as the Orleans Party, deprived of their head, drifted aimlessly to and fro upon the political horizon, forsaken to the feeble steering of the Comte de Genlis. Things had already reached this extremity when the adventurous Lucette presented herself at Le Raincy.... Mirabeau had ceased to be an active agent in the Prince's cause, and was only mentioned as a name in the studied indiscretions of His Serene Highness's favourite.

Nevertheless Genlis, aided by the magic of this name and by his personal talents, upon which he relied with all the confidence of the born mediocrity, hoped to carry on high the Orleans banner, despite the winds from every party which conspired to lower it.... We have seen how far this courtier was to be relied on: a woman comes to him amid his political meditations, and off he flies, post-haste, in pursuit of her, without a thought to the condition in which he leaves his master's camp, of which he considers himself the outpost !

Such were the details concerning the supposed Orleanist conspiracy which I procured, in the summer of 1790, with the assistance of my actress from the Théâtre de Monsieur. It resulted in one invaluable piece of information for the Court: that Mirabeau was only waiting for an opportune moment to abandon the cause of the Duc d'Orléans. With a little tact and some sacrifice, Louis XVI. would be able to win over to his side this prodigious orator, whose eloquence captured all parties. Furnished with this excellent news, I made myself ready to wait upon the Queen. I had not seen Her Majesty since I had received that blow for which I had so well revenged myself: there is something so plebeian about a swollen black eye that I had not ventured to present myself at the Château. My fortnight's absence from Her Majesty's apartments had been accounted for, through Mademoiselle Bertin, by a pretended attack of fever. When I once more appeared before Marie Antoinette, nothing remained of my contusion beyond a slight bistre mark beneath the eye, which the Queen took to be the last trace of the fever from which I had just recovered.

Her Majesty learnt with extreme satisfaction that the Court had a chance of succeeding with Mirabeau. She clapped her pretty hands, and cried, "That man is ours: leave that to me."



Saying her in such good humor and writing, moreover, to give her an idea of the skillfulness with which I had fulfilled my task. I told her with a few reservations the part which Léonard had played in the matter.... Mademoiselle Bertin was present, and I could see from a little poor she gave, that her perspicacity had failed in the passages from my narrative; but Mademoiselle Rose had by that time turned forty, and I cared little for the grimes of a beauty more than twice of age.

In order to laugh at the tricks of Lady Bannesson, and especially at poor Genlis' wild-goose chase. Marie Antoinette for a moment recovered the power of laughter of what she used to call her good years.... and then said to me:

"We must give the dear girl the five hundred louis you promised her, Léonard: M. de Laporte\* shall have his instructions to-morrow. And now," continued the Queen, after a moment's reflection, "we must set to work without delay to win Mirabeau. Whatever price he chooses to set upon what he calls his conscience will be cheap if we succeed in taking him away from the Duc d'Orléans, and I shall look to you to take the first step in approaching him."

"Your Majesty knows my devotedness; but do you not think, Madame, that Mirabeau and Léonard are two names that sound singularly together?"

"Wherefore? M. de Mirabeau will not think it at all extraordinary that we should employ upon a confidential mission a person on whom we can rely more than on all the statesmen who surround us."

"Yes, Madame, if you mean those whom the nation has forced upon you; but among His Majesty's Privy Council...."

"I should prefer a council consisting of Madame Campan, Rose Bertin and yourself. Personally I would rather place my confidence in a Léonard than in a Bertrand de Moléville † or

\* Arnaud de La Porte, the Intendant of the Civil List. He was also the depositary of the most delicate correspondence, and was one of the most trusted and trusty servants of the Royal Family in France. He was guillotined in 1792, in his fifty-fifth year.

† Antoine François Marquis de Bertrand-Moléville, 1744—1818. He became Minister of Marine in 1791. Shortly afterwards he fled to England, where he wrote several historical works, among others an *Histoire de la révolution de France* in fourteen volumes, and *Mémoires particuliers sur le règne de Louis XVI.*, in two volumes. He returned to France at the Restoration, but received no Court employment.

a Mallet Dupan....\* I have no faith in the cold-blooded intrigues of those gentlemen; I may be mistaken, but I suspect all those people who have begun to work for what they call a Counter-Revolution.... They seem to me to be mere methodical conspirators.... plotting only with their brains and not at all with their hearts.... I beg you, Léonard, do not refuse to see Mirabeau."

"I refuse to obey Your Majesty! I could never entertain such a thought! What shall I say to the proud orator?"

"Nothing directly from me, and still less from the King. We might perhaps fail with a man so difficult to manage, and we must risk as little as possible."

"I think I follow Your Majesty's meaning. I shall tell him that I have learnt from a good source that the King regrets the absence of so powerful a support as M. de Mirabeau; that His Majesty every day praises the talents which he displays in the tribune; and that he has more than once repeated that none but M. de Mirabeau is able to bring about a lasting peace between the Monarchy and the Revolution."

"Do not forget to add that, according to the indirect but reliable information that has reached you, the sincerity of the King's sentiments is the more certain in that they are shared by the Queen.... For you know, Léonard," continued Marie Antoinette with a smile, "it is always I who am supposed to inspire the Court resistance to measures dictated by the patriotism of the Assembly."

"In order to impress the Comte de Mirabeau more in this regard, should I tell him that I have heard that Your Majesty yourself desires to have a preliminary interview with him? I should not let it seem that I was instructed to ask for it, but I should pretend that I had heard from a well-informed person that Your Majesty has really that intention, and I would take it upon myself to arrange the meeting, if it suited the deputy's views to agree to it."

"Yes, that is not a bad idea," replied Marie Antoinette, reflectively, and instinctively throwing a glance in the mirror

\* Jacques Mallet-Dupan, the editor of the *Mercure de France*, the Monarchical paper. He too fled, in 1792, proceeding first to his native town of Geneva and then to London, where he published the *Mercure Britannique*, 1799. He died next year, aged fifty.

which surmounted the mantel. "But if this man should, in spite of his political ardour, have retained the fatuousness for which he was so renowned a few years since, and of which he gave such strong proofs in his letters written from the prison at Vincennes,\* he will perhaps think that I have become enamoured of him.... and the kind public, the public which has drawn up so long a list of my lovers, will not hesitate to add to it the name of the tribune Mirabeau, who, as you know," added the Queen, with bitter facetiousness, "is physically so attractive a squire of dames.... But no matter, if the eagle of the Constituent Assembly, after listening to your recital, suggests an interview with me, do not hesitate to promise it.... reserving to me, of course, the right to fix the occasion.... a woman is not conquered by the same arguments that triumph over a nation. In fact I have reason to know that Mirabeau would be less frequently victorious if he had ladies as his opponents in his oratorical combats."

"What Your Majesty says has often occurred to my mind: this orator, who is at present so greatly to be dreaded, could easily have been brought over to the Court party by some clever, insinuating lady.... the kings of the tribune have their favourites like the others."

"No doubt, but the opportunity has been lost." And the Queen added, in a sprightly tone, mingled with a shade of irony, "I beg you, Léonard, to believe that I have no intention of undertaking this hitherto neglected means."

"Ah! Madame!"

"To return to serious things.... Do you cleverly lead Mirabeau to express a desire to see me, and I flatter myself that by artfully playing partly upon his greed, and partly upon his pride, two passions which are said to be easily aroused in his volcanic nature, we shall succeed in bringing him round to our side; and our cause is gained if that eloquent crater can be once brought to cover our enemies with its glowing streams of lava."

\*See *Lettres originales de Mirabeau, écrites du donjon de Vincennes, pendant les années 1777, 78, 79 et 80; contenant tous les détails sur sa vie privée, ses malheurs, et ses amours avec Sophie Ruffei, Marquise de Monnier: recueillies par P. Manuel, Citoyen français.* 4 vols., 8vo. Paris, Strasburg and London, 1792. Mirabeau was sent to Vincennes in 1777 for the rape of and adultery with this same Sophie, on a *lettre de cachet* obtained by the Marquis de Mirabeau, his father.

I promised the Queen that I would see Mirabeau the next morning, knowing that he spent almost the whole of his nights in a debauch of wine, food and voluptuousness, in company with a number of courtesans, and that he remained the entire morning in bed. It was there that he gave his audiences to the deputies, magistrates and even women who desired to speak to him; and this without in any way changing his cynical habits in the presence of the last. For instance, Mirabeau was accustomed to go to bed in the Italian fashion, that is entirely naked; and if, in the course of the conversation, one of his fair petitioners roused his rhetorical vein by a retort which was opposed to his views, he would withdraw his Herculean arms from beneath the coverlet and wave them about in support of his arguments. In these moments of declamatory fervour, a modest woman might think herself lucky if she escaped the sight of the count's hirsute \* bust, displayed in all its academic nudity.

The identity of the instrument of the first advances made to Mirabeau by the Court has up to the present (1808) remained veiled in mystery. Numbers have claimed the honour, and the muse of romance has allowed anything and everything to be presumed regarding the first steps, which were in reality entrusted to me. I must add that I learnt during the Revolution that Marie Antoinette had first wished to send Madame la Princesse de Lamballe to Mirabeau, and afterwards Madame Campan; but both these ladies had begged to be excused, giving as the reason for their refusal the count's boldness and immorality. "If Your Majesty condescends to receive him," the Princess had added, "there is no doubt that the respect due to supreme greatness will restrain him within the limits of a proper reserve; but believe me, Madame, it will require all your sovereign majesty to keep in check the audacity of this Philosopher, who regards female virtue as a mere prejudice."

\* In this quality of hairiness, Mirabeau resembled Charles James Fox.

### CHAPTER III

Mirabeau's house—I am sent by the Queen to seek an interview with him—My apprehensions—I have a conversation with the tribune—The real character of the interviews between the Queen and Mirabeau—The great orator endeavours to induce the Court to adopt a political system—The King and Queen refuse—The Queen's antipathy to La Fayette—I am entrusted with an important mission—A marshal's baton for the Marquis de Bouillé—My nocturnal departure.

IF you turn out of the boulevard and follow the Rue de la Chaussée-d'Antin for about a third of its length, you will see on your right a modest-looking mansion, though furnished with a carriage-entrance, and conspicuous for two horses' heads sculptured upon the house-front. Now that so many military glories, sprung from the cradle of the Revolution, have kept busy all the trumpeters of fame, and diverted the memory from the first great lights of the tribune, we pass without stopping before the house which I have pointed out to you; but it was not so during the ten years which followed the death of Mirabeau. Little groups were continually forming there, and the dreamy poet let his glance rest with rapture upon that abode from which issued the mighty soul of the great orator.

It was towards this house that I turned my steps on a fine summer morning in 1790. I had embroidered my theme with all the subtlety I possessed, in order to accomplish my mission and not expose the Queen to the shame of a refusal. As you are by this time aware, I lacked neither assurance nor resolution, and I had acquired such practice in the conduct of life that I had gained, without any instruction, an amount of experience which did not fear to come into contact with the most abundant erudition. My adroitness might be compared to a musician's: by force of habit I was able to play upon my imagination, my wit and my judgment as he would play upon his fiddle or his flute.... Nevertheless I felt somewhat embar-

rassed when I reflected upon the immense mental faculties of the man I was about to meet.... What, I asked myself, will become of my Gascon cunning and loquacity in presence of a man like Mirabeau, whose eloquence roars loud as thunder and flows swift as a torrent? However, I am in for it, and I must get out of it as best I can, if not successfully, at least skilfully.

My hand was upon the bell-pull, when I was suddenly seized with an unfortunate remembrance. You will not have forgotten the dispenser of fisticuffs who thought fit so rudely to paint my optic black, and whom in revenge I immediately had thrashed by my underlings.... Well, this French "boxer," as I think I told you, was a servant of Mirabeau's.... What was to become of me if I should find myself face to face with this man, when the door before which I stood was opened?.... I dared not pull the bell.... I beheld, by anticipation, this too familiar figure presenting itself before me; I imagined the result of a recognition; I heard the valet who had been so finely drubbed by my orders denouncing me as a spy to the irascible Mirabeau, and the latter commanding the lackey to take in hand a weapon of formidable reciprocity.... All this seemed inevitable, should my Belleville adversary come to the door. I do not know whether a Roman of the heroic age would have turned back before such an omen; but I myself was sorely tempted to retrace my steps.

However, reflection soon came to my aid. I felt that I had pledged my word to the Queen, and that it was impossible to retreat: I was in the position of a soldier who must either conquer or die, because there is nothing but ignominy at his back.... I rang.... I cannot at this date describe the effect produced on my mind by the sound of the little bronze bell which I had just set in motion. A dead man to whom Providence had granted the cruel privilege of hearing his death-knell would not have been more awe-struck than I was at that moment. I heard my heart thump against my breast; my temples beat so as to raise my hat from my head; my legs trembled beneath me.... A man came to the door; it was not the Belleville "boxer," but a footman as gentle as a young lady, who smiled to me in the most agreeable manner, and asked me my business.

I told him that I had an important communication to make to M. le Comte, and that if he was engaged, I would wait until he could see me in private.... The valet replied that M. Mirabeau (no prefix) was alone, and that I should be admitted at once, as it was not his master's habit to keep "patriots" waiting, when he could help it. The servant added, somewhat affectedly, that it was not customary "here" to announce the names of visitors, since all Frenchmen were equal before M. Mirabeau, as before the law.

This harangue, which seemed to me to be very erudite for a lackey, tended to reassure me, since it saved me the annoyance of giving my name, which naturally conveyed the idea of a chignon or a curling-tongs.

The door of the deputy's bedroom opened, and I beheld his rough, pimpled face, crowned with a cotton handkerchief, and reclining upon a dainty pillow; and I confess that my resolution very nearly abandoned me when I heard a formidable voice issue from that unprepossessing face, and say :

"What do you want, monsieur?"

"Monsieur le comte...."

"My name is Mirabeau; leave out the titles."

"Monsieur, I have come to see you because I know that the Constitutional Monarchy recognizes in you its most eloquent and its most sincere defender."

"And then?" asked the deputy, with a smile that struck me as equivocal.

"That system of government, whose excellence you have so triumphantly proclaimed from the national tribune, admits of a king as the agent of the executive."

"No doubt.... well?"

"Therefore the first and most present duty of that Monarch is to come to an understanding and to act in full and entire harmony with the legislative powers who place the sceptre in his hand.... in other words, with the law."

"Oho!" said Mirabeau, with some surprise. "Be so good, monsieur, as to be seated, and tell me whom I have the honour to address."

"Monsieur," I replied, very timidly, "I am Léonard...."

"Léonard the poet?"

"No, monsieur...."

"Ah! I have it, Léonard the...." And drawing forth from beneath the bed-clothes two brawny bare arms, Mirabeau imitated the action of curling a fringe.

"Precisely," I replied, with a somewhat forced smile and a slight blush.

"Well, Monsieur Léonard," resumed Mirabeau, boldly, "the Queen had beautiful hair ten years ago."

I was, I confess, somewhat dumfounded by this ingenious and pungent criticism upon my political intervention, and I felt a little shaken in my southern sprightliness. However, I did not long remain at a loss.

"Yes, monsieur," I replied, ingenuously, "the Queen had beautiful hair ten years ago, and I was well employed in taking care of it. But, apart from the fact that that beautiful hair is beginning to turn grey, I thought that at a time when distinctions of rank have disappeared in the eyes of the law, and when the contempt which formerly surrounded such or such a profession is no longer an attribute of good citizenship, I too might exercise my share in the rights of man, and claim an interview with that deputy of the nation who showed himself the most ardent promoter of those rights."

"Well said, Monsieur Léonard. I should have suspected from your accent that I had to do with a man of wit... Do not go and take sides against me with the Abbé Maury... I am at your service."

"You can readily imagine, monsieur, that I have preserved some relations with persons attached to the Court; and I may even tell you that those relations are such that the most intimate conferences of the closet frequently come to my ears."

"The deuce they do!"

"So much so, monsieur, that I know of my own certain knowledge that your name is often mentioned by the King and even by the Queen..."

"My name! and what do they say about me?" asked Mirabeau, raising himself eagerly upon his elbow.

"A deal of good..."

"Do you mean that? I am surprised to hear it..."

"That is because you are not aware of the real inclination of the Court..."



"And that is . . ."

"To throw itself into your arms . . ."

"Monsieur Léonard," said Mirabeau, looking me straight in the face, "have you been sent to me by the Queen?" And as he pronounced these words, he raised himself to a sitting posture and displayed to my view a bust that must have resembled Nebuchadnezzar's, what time that monarch played the hairy beast.

"The Queen knows absolutely nothing of the step I have taken to-day, Monsieur Mirabeau; but I am none the less convinced that Her Majesty would set the greatest store upon your accession to the Court interest."

"What is that you say, monsieur? Have I ever shown myself opposed to the interests of the Court? I have only attacked them when I thought them ill-conceived, and when they tended, by their maladroit deviations, to destroy the Monarchy itself . . . And so you may readily believe that, relying upon the principle of the preservation of the rights of the Crown, I should never refuse to act in concert with the Sovereign. It was not I who withdrew from him: it was he who alienated me . . ."

This clever piece of policy, by means of which Mirabeau at once, and without compromising himself, entered into the spirit of my mission, proved to me that he undoubtedly took me for what I actually was, a direct emissary of Marie Antoinette's . . . Nor did he for a moment hesitate to add, "I desire that the King and Queen should know that I am and I always shall be their most faithful servant."

The Queen was anxiously awaiting the result of my expedition, and she was enraptured when I told her of Mirabeau's friendly intentions. Her Majesty concluded from the circumstantial details which I communicated to her that she might safely appoint a rendez-vous with the great orator, and I was instructed to return to him the next day and inform him of it. The first meeting of the Queen and Mirabeau took place at nine o'clock the same evening in the garden of the Tuileries, beneath the tall chestnut-trees on the left, as you leave the Palace. All the memoir-writers agree on this; but they have also added a goodly number of lies to this historic episode. Many of them have been pleased to represent Mirabeau as a sort of Celadon sighing by

Marie Antoinette's side, some even say at her feet, and yielding so far to the delirium of his senses as to beg a kiss from Her Majesty . . . . Not a word of all this is true. Mirabeau enjoyed, and deservedly, the reputation of a man of bad morals, but he was before everything an accomplished politician, who would have taken excellent care not to do his cupidity an ill turn by risking insipid madrigals, which would have only covered him with ridicule . . . . During the two interviews which took place between the Queen and Mirabeau, several of Her Majesty's ladies stood near enough to hear the conversation, which was full of dignity on Marie Antoinette's side and serious and respectful on that of Mirabeau.

After his interviews with the Queen, Mirabeau saw Louis XVI. himself, but it is an error to say that the King gave him an audience in the cellars of the Tuilleries. There is no shadow of truth in this romantic embellishment, which may have gratified the lovers of the marvellous: Mirabeau had too much tact to bring any such ridiculous mystery into his reconciliation with the Court, when he was bent upon its being known that he was acting in accordance with his principles, in which the Monarchy ended by acquiescing.

It was in this way, and only in 1790 (not in 1789, as many historians have maintained) that the most influential member of the Constituent Assembly negotiated with the Crown for the sale of that fickle, fluctuating conscience, which had at first yielded to an eager feeling of resentment against the nobility, and which soon showed itself purchaseable on behalf of the Duc d'Orléans, and not long after in the interest of the Monarchy itself.

Mirabeau proposed to Louis XVI. none but those measures which would enable him to become the master of the Revolution without altering the principle of it; and above all things, he recommended the King not to leave France. He may have suggested to him that he should withdraw to a fortified camp from which he could have presented the Assembly with a formal Constitution, drawn up on the basis which the legislative body was then occupied in discussing. Mirabeau may have mentioned Montmédy as a spot in which His Majesty would have been able, in safety, to revise the fundamental law and to impose it,

with fresh Monarchic additions, upon the French nation. But it is certain that never for a moment did Mirabeau accede to the plan for a flight from the country. He abhorred the emigration; he spoke of it as an act of signal cowardice; and on the part of the Sovereign it would have partaken, in his eyes, of the nature of a crime.

After the death of Mirabeau, Louis XVI., who, in spite of that great man's advice, had never renounced his project of leaving France, was so ill-advised as to attempt to carry it into execution, and it was that which lost him. For it was easy to see that the journey to Montmédy was nothing more than a pretext. But I am anticipating.

After concluding with the Court a treaty which was redeemed from absolute impartiality by only one clause, that of venality, Mirabeau soon perceived that the road of safety which he had opened up for the Royal Pair would not be followed. The unhappy Louis XVI.'s nature was too persistently arbitrary, and the great tribune despaired of subduing the storm which raged around the Throne . . . . But his conscience was sold, and he was obliged to ascend the tribune and extenuate the wrongs of the Monarchy and repulse the imputations, often only too well-founded, uttered against a two-faced Royalty, whose secret proceedings were at perpetual variance with their official protestations , . . . I do not hesitate to say that Louis XVI. and Marie Antoinette never openly attacked the new order of things established against their will; if any plots were undertaken on their behalf, it was not, I firmly believe, with their consent . . . . Their system was one of inert resistance, of contradictory ideas, of a succession of petty intrigues, which, without any hope of success, led them more and more rapidly towards the principle which was to lead to their destruction . . . . Mirabeau wore out his popularity in a deplorable manner, tarnishing his brilliant reputation in defence of these Royalist puerilities . . . . It would have been fine on his part, since he had once sold himself to the Court, to reconquer, by sheer force of eloquence, that preponderance of the Executive Power which the Sovereign had allowed to slip from his hands . . . . Mirabeau's death occurred in time to forestall that of his fame . . . .

I allowed myself more than once to observe to the Queen

that M. de La Fayette, although called upon, in his capacity of head of the National Guard, to fulfil the duties of a custodian, had replaced them by those of a guardian, without Their Majesties' deigning to acknowledge it.

"Ah! as for you, Léonard," replied the Queen, in a tone that was almost one of annoyance, "you are in love with M. de La Fayette."

"In love is not the word, Madame; but I heard him at Versailles solicit the privilege of watching over Your Majesties' safety, and I see him daily acting so as to assure it . . . ."

"Even a benefactor is odious when he appears in the guise of a jailer."

"I am certain that Your Majesty is deceived as to the sentiments of M. de La Fayette . . . ."

"Léonard," replied the Queen, with a certain haughtiness, "I refuse to be contradicted on this point. Whether rightly or from prejudice, I cannot recognize in that man the good intentions which you attribute to him . . . . Did you see him during that nonsensical farce which they called the federation? Did he not seem to be putting himself forward to the crowd as the sovereign who was to be honoured? . . . . The King, the descendant of St. Louis, had the air of being the first gentleman of a La Fayette . . . . Oh! it was hideous . . . ."

I felt that it would be imprudent to insist upon rehabilitating the general in the Queen's good graces. Marie Antoinette's dislike for M. de La Fayette, sprung perhaps from the independence of mind which he had displayed upon his first presentation, was now complicated by the violent slight her pride had undergone during the feast of the 14th of July on the Champ-de-Mars. And it must be agreed that if ever pride had good cause, it had it then; for not only had the crowd given a veritable ovation to the general commanding the National Guard, but the President of the Constituent Assembly, by placing Bailly, the Mayor of Paris, on his left, while Louis XVI. stood on his right, relegated the King of France and Navarre to the third position, since the enthusiasm of the populace raised the friend of Washington to the first.

This circumstance was renewed two or three times during the more or less pagan ceremonies celebrated at the altar of

the fatherland; and it was remarked that the officiating prelate, M. de Talleyrand, Bishop of Autun, in his sacerdotal garb embellished with tricoloured ribands, witnessed the humiliation of Royalty with a subtle smile which was not in its essence evangelical.

When the Queen spoke of this day, and of "the horrors that had been committed," a sudden flush would rise to her face; her beautiful eyes would flash; and she showed that her impression of the 14th of July must have been a very painful one. I accordingly renounced my attempts to convince of the good-feeling of General de La Fayette a Princess who was evidently determined to allow him not one generous action; and of this I received positive proof at the time of the flight of the 21st of June, 1791, which was destined to be the ruin of the unfortunate Louis XVI. I shall be able to relate some entirely new details concerning this event, the truth of which I trust that no one will doubt; for all Europe knows that I was one of the most active agents of the Court in the execution of this project. But although zealously associating myself with it when called upon to do so, I sincerely regretted that the King was determined to follow this plan, which was ill-conceived in its origin, and awkwardly, and above all not sufficiently secretly, carried out in its execution, as I shall soon show.

Middle-age has its follies as well as youth, and the madnesses of the autumn of life are generally madder than those of spring-time. I had fallen absolutely in love with Lucette, that daughter of my porter of whom I had made an actress, after having promptly wearied of her charms.... What strange fancies spring in the human heart! When this girl first gave herself to me, and when I knew that she belonged to me alone, she had inspired me with but a passing caprice. Now that her favours were far from being my exclusive property, and that she even displayed great frankness in pluming herself upon the number of her intrigues, I became as love-sick as a Frenchman of the age of chivalry or a Spaniard of the time of Ferdinand and Isabella.... In order to attract this fair and sprightly courtesan, I made sacrifices worthy of a farmer-general. Sometimes, when I thought of it, I pitied myself; but I took pleasure in yielding to Lucette's enchantment; I became intoxicated with her love-philtre, though

I was fully aware of the deceitful nature of its charm. Nor did she hesitate to say to me, with a cynical recklessness which, perhaps, made her yet more dear to me (for old rakes have droll ideas):

“Léonard, you have nothing to reproach me with : I am unfaithful to you, but I do not deceive you.... that is at least an advantage over any traffic you might have with an ordinary woman.”

How could I be angry at such a quibble, worthy of Ninon in her best days?

On the 12th of June 1791, at ten o'clock in the evening, I was in my bed-room, and not alone. The foregoing paragraphs will easily enable you to guess with whom it was that I was discussing anything rather than politics; and yet the moment was approaching when my political importance was to receive its greatest development. There enter into a man's life stages of preoccupation when he does not hear the sound of a ring; and it was without any previous warning that my confidential servant, discreetly pushing my door, slipped his arm through the opening and held out to me a note, which I took from him.... Lucette was very delicate in all that did not concern matters of gallantry. She contented herself with asking me if the missive came from a mistress, and upon my replying with a very sharp no, accompanied by a pronounced frown, she did not prosecute her enquiries further. The note contained these few words:

“Monsieur Léonard will be so good as to proceed at once to the Tuileries. He will go to the small gate giving into the Passage des Feuillants; a Swiss called Parent will admit him. A footman will await Monsieur Léonard at the door at the foot of the Pavillon de Flore, on the garden-side, and will lead him to the place where he will be received .... Let there be not the smallest delay.”

“I have to go to the Tuileries at once,” said I to Lucette.

“What, at this time of night?” asked the actress, in surprise.

I traced with my finger the last line of the note, and she read, “Not the smallest delay.”

“True,” she said, gravely.... But she resumed, with her infectious gaiety, “But there are some things that cause very little delay ....”

"You charming, mad thing!" I cried, giving Lucette a kiss....  
And then . . . .

"I told you so," resumed the mischievous actress, "it was not worth calling a delay." And I left.

I was admitted to the Tuileries with all the mystery for which the letter had prepared me, and I was taken through the gloomy and deserted apartments to the Queen's closet. There I found the King, the Queen and Madame Élisabeth.

I must here explain that the Princesse de Lamballe had gone abroad in the preceding year by the express command of Their Majesties. I will hazard no conjecture as to the mission with which Her Highness may have been entrusted. I never learnt anything for certain concerning this. All that I have since heard is that she had brief interviews with the French Princes during a stealthy journey to Germany, and that she subsequently repaired to England. But my perfect acquaintance with the character and the intellectual resources of Madame de Lamballe enables me to add that that angelic creature was of all women the least fitted to conduct a political intrigue. Her Highness lacked neither wit nor judgment, but nature had denied her that strong moral resolution without which no great project can be carried to a successful issue, together with that vehemence of temperament which in women is the most potent factor in any transcendental action. These qualities were to be found in such women as Catherine II. and Maria Theresa, while the suave organization of Madame de Lamballe was notable rather for that sublime longanimity, that superb, noble courage which we call resignation, and of which she was to give the world such striking proofs subsequent to the events of June, 1791, to which I now return.

I found the King seated on a little sofa in the Queen's closet. His Majesty, who sometimes complained of full-bloodedness after dinner, had removed his collar. Nevertheless his face seemed higher in colour than usual, a symptom which I attributed to some keen excitement, of which I was doubtless about to hear the cause. The Queen and Madame Élisabeth were seated in arm-chairs on either side of the sofa. Louis XVI. was the first to address me.

"Léonard," said His Majesty, in the gentle accents that had

for some years become habitual to him, "your zeal and fidelity have long been known to us; and you have doubtless perceived that on more than one occasion our confidence in you has proved that we appreciate your devotion."

"Sire," I replied, with a bow, "I am overwhelmed with the kindness of Your Majesty and the Queen . . ."

"To-day, Léonard," resumed the King, laying great stress upon his words, "I look to you for a further and more important proof of that devotion, and I will say at once that I do not believe I could choose a better agent than yourself for my purpose, which is one requiring not only zeal but intelligence."

Here the Queen and Madame Élisabeth endorsed the King's compliment in the most flattering fashion:

"Certainly, certainly!" said the two Princesses together. Louis XVI. continued :

"It is necessary, sir, that you should know all: follow me attentively."

"Sire, I will give the closest attention to Your Majesty's words . . ."

"You know better than anybody," said the King, "the courage and resignation I have shown of late. While my wife, my sister and my aunts,\* all who surrounded me, were yielding to the liveliest alarm, I remained calm and serene, for I had nothing to reproach myself with . . . My friends, whether well or ill-advised, urged me to leave the Kingdom, but I invariably replied that a father should not leave his children when passion turns their thoughts away from their duty . . . I do not even now accept their advice in its entirety, but I have determined to follow it in so far as it agrees with the plan of a man whose loss we all regret . . . I mean Mirabeau. I shall set out in a few days for a camp which I am about to order the Marquis de Bouillé † to form at Montmédy. And this order, my dear Léonard, I wish you to carry to the general, together with the patent and insignia of a Marshal of France . . .

\* Mesdames Tantes had recently left France.

† François Claude Amour, Marquis de Bouillé, 1739—1800, one of Louis XVI.'s most devoted adherents. He joined the Princes at Coblenz after the frustrated attempt at escape of the Royal Family, and subsequently journeyed to the different courts of Europe, in a vain attempt to obtain the King's deliverance. Finally he withdrew to England, where he published his *Mémoires sur la révolution* in 1797.

You can see the importance of this mission. Bouillé has sufficient troops under his command, carefully chosen from among those not yet infected with the spirit of the Revolution . . . . But he must receive his instructions with the most scrupulous precision, so that he may have the opportunity first to concentrate his forces, and then to provide me with an escort . . . ."

"Why does not Your Majesty say to provide us with an escort?" exclaimed the Queen, eagerly.

"Madame," replied Louis XVI., "you shall know my wishes presently; let me finish what I have to say to Léonard." And turning to me, "A gentleman of my Household, even if I knew of one whose capacity was equal to yours (a deep bow from me) would not have been nearly so well-fitted for the mission which you are to undertake . . . . I do not want a man of luxurious habits, a sybarite unable to travel save in a soft-sprunged post-chaise . . . . What I want is a sturdy fellow like yourself, strong on his legs, and able to make his way across country and, if necessary, to swim a river, rather than fall into some ambush of Patriots . . . . Your errand is to reach Montmédy, as the bird flies, within three days: do you accept it, Léonard?"

"Most gladly, Sire. I will set out in an hour, furnished with as light a luggage as when I entered Paris twenty-two years ago, and I undertake to reach Montmédy in less time than Your Majesty has allowed me . . . ."

"I have no doubt of it," replied Louis XVI., with a kindly smile. "And do not forget, Léonard, that a King of France can make a gentleman of the messenger who, to serve him, is able to walk like a hair-dresser's apprentice . . . ."

These words were spoken with a smile; but I was well able to see that the King meant his promise seriously. I suddenly felt a glow thrilling through my veins . . . Ah, vanity!

Drawing from his pocket a despatch folded into a small compass and bearing no address, the King handed it to me, saying:

"You know to whom to give it . . . that is enough . . . ."

At the same time the Queen rose, went to her secrétaire, and returned with an article fifteen or sixteen inches in length, which she handed to the King.

"Here is the marshal's baton of the Marquis de Bouillé,"

said the King, giving it to me. And as His Majesty doubtless read upon my features some signs of embarrassment, he added :

" You seem to think it rather bulky."

" I confess that, having regard to the mystery necessary to my expedition, it would have been desirable that I should not have to dread what the presence of this symbol of the highest military rank might reveal."

" I have made the same reflection," said Madame Élisabeth, timidly...

" Sister," replied the King, " Léonard is clever enough to conceal that baton from every eye... Moreover, in the last extremity, he will bury it beneath a bush or throw it away from him, should the danger become too urgent... But only in the last extremity, do you hear, Léonard?... It has always been the custom under the reign of the Kings my ancestors that the insignia of the highest military distinction should be remitted to the holder by the Sovereign: to depart from this usage would be to attack the prerogative of the Throne and to lessen the sovereign grandeur... we are particularly anxious that M. de Bouillé should receive the baton which we send him..."

Madame Élisabeth began to smile; and I seemed to read upon her gracious features some such thought as:

" And in order to avoid attacking either the prerogative of the Throne or the sovereign grandeur, His Majesty sends M. de Bouillé his marshal's baton by the hand of a coiffeur."

" Go, Léonard, and good luck go with you," resumed Louis XVI., giving me his Royal hand, which I respectfully pressed to my heart. " Remember that not only our hopes, but perhaps the sole chances of safety for the Monarchy, depend upon you from to-night... I will not detain you longer..."

The Queen and Madame Élisabeth gave me their hands to kiss, and I took leave of the three illustrious personages, proud of their confidence, and solemnly promising to fulfil their wishes at the risk of my life.

" I am leaving for the frontier this moment," I said to Lucette, who had been reading while awaiting my return.

" Has the King made you a general?" asked the mad-cap, with a laugh.

" Do not ask any questions; I could not answer them....

You are a good girl, and I believe you love me sincerely; look after my house . . . . I must set out at once . . . ."

"Are they going to bring the post-horses here then?"

"No, I am going on foot . . . ."

"On foot, like the wandering Jew!" exclaimed Lucette, in surprise . . . . "In all but my financial resources," I replied, going to my desk and putting in my pocket two rolls of a hundred louis each . . . . "Adieu . . . . adieu. One last kiss . . . ."

"Tell me, Léonard, that journey on foot . . . ."

I left my house at half past midnight; one o'clock struck from the tower of La Chapelle as I stepped on to the plain of Saint-Denis, up to my ankles in mud.

## CHAPTER IV

It is proposed that the Queen and the Children of France shall go to Brussels—Marie Antoinette refuses to leave the King before he is in safety—A natural deduction from this fact—The vicissitudes of my journey—My rough apprenticeship as a horseman—The little shepherd—The sham carter—My letter to the Marquis de Bouillé—A coiffeur godfather to a Marshal of France—Bouillé's anxiety.

I was not in a position to learn at the time what happened at the Tuileries after my departure, but when in Brabant next year, I heard it from the lips of a distinguished personage, who was in Louis XVI.'s full confidence. Discretion compels me to keep the name of this person secret, he being now in a very different position from that which his opinions and devotion in 1791 would lead one to expect; but his name will be no mystery to observers who have studied the pageantry of the Revolution. I will give the story as he told it to me at Brussels shortly after the arrest of the King at Varennes. I took the precaution to write it down at the time, as a document of the greatest interest.

"On the 18th of June," said he, "I was commanded to wait upon the King. I found him seated at his writing-desk, leaning his head on his hand, and apparently plunged in profound meditation. After a time he raised his eyes, saw me, and said :

"'If, monsieur, I knew a man more worthy than yourself of my confidence and esteem, I would choose him for the part which I am about to entrust to you.'

"I bowed low, and enthusiastically repeated the vow I had sworn to be faithful to him.

"'I shall leave on the night of the 19th,' said Louis, 'together with the Queen and the Dauphin, for the camp at Montmédy. I wish you to set out to-day for Brussels. You will there await my despatches, which will be of the highest importance, and will, I am sure of it, give you the greatest satisfaction.'

"‘Sire, I shall always regard it as a high favour to be permitted to give you any proof of my zeal.’

“‘See no one,’ resumed His Majesty, ‘speak to no one whatever of what I have told you, and await the packet I have mentioned at Brussels: I repeat, it will give you the keenest gratification to receive it.’

“I left the King, much perturbed in my mind as to the contents of the packet which was to give me such great pleasure, and still more as to the consequence of His Majesty’s proposed expedition. I thought that the latter must be very ill arranged, if the whole of the Royal Family were to travel in the same carriage. But Louis XVI. had given me no time to make a single observation, and according to him, nothing was so urgent as my departure for Brussels.

“I was hastening to return home and prepare for my journey, when an officer of the Queen told me that Her Majesty desired to see me. I was ushered through the private apartments, but at the moment when I was entering Marie Antoinette’s room, the King’s footstep was heard approaching.

“‘Withdraw for a little while,’ said the Queen; ‘the King will not stay long. You can return when he has gone: I wish to speak with you.’

“I went into the library, and after waiting for a quarter o an hour, I was told that the Queen would receive me. Her Majesty had always overwhelmed me with kindnesses, and my attachment for her knew no limits. Of this she was well aware, and so soon as she saw me, she said:

“‘You have just seen the King. I know he has forbidden you to speak to any one of the orders you have received; but I thought I ought to explain to you the enigma of the packet you were to look forward to receiving: it will contain the news that the King intends to confide to your care myself, my daughter and my son.’

“‘O. Madame,’ cried I, throwing myself at the Queen’s feet, ‘do not render useless my zeal for the sacred persons of Your Majesty, of Monseigneur le Dauphin, and of Madame. By departing with the King, you will needlessly expose yourself . . . Since I am thought worthy of receiving this most august charge from my master, deign to confide yourself to me entirely.

Nothing would be easier than that I should take out a passport for myself, my wife and my children under an assumed name. We should leave at the same time as the King, but would follow another road; and you would be at Brussels before it was known that Your Majesties had left the Tuileries.'

"'No,' replied the Queen, firmly, 'I have sworn not to leave the King before he is in a place of safety, and that will only be at Montmédy.'

"I tried in vain to dissuade Her Majesty from persisting in this dangerous resolve; nothing could induce her to abandon it. Those who have doubted the Queen's devotion to duty would have relinquished this insulting opinion had they seen her, as I did, solemnly and with dignity refusing the only course which would have saved her from risking to fate her destiny and that of her children. The event proved that if she had followed my advice, she would have escaped from her enemies, since Monsieur was able to leave France without interference by the same road which I would have had the Queen take. But it seemed to her that she would be purchasing her life at the cost of an act of cowardice, had she consented to be parted from the King before being certain that he had no more to fear. As I continued to implore the Queen to take my advice, she resumed:

"'Let us speak no more of this; I am absolutely determined, and all that you can say would be useless.... I did not send for you in order to arrange the details of the journey, but so that you might know what to expect in the packet, and also because I wished to anticipate by a few days the pleasure you would experience on witnessing our arrival at Brussels.... And now go, take your family with you; we shall soon meet again.'"

This narrative should suffice to settle the opinion of the historians upon the flight of Louis XVI. It was evidently the Monarch's intention to send the Queen, the Heir to the Throne, and the Princess Royal to Brussels, and doubtless Madame Elisabeth also. And he would scarcely have done this, had he not intended himself later to follow them.

In order not to transpose the order of my recital, I must now speak of the far from sentimental journey which I undertook

by the King's order on the 13th of June, 1791. Up to the present, I have had to relate none but anecdotes of the toilet, adventures of the *petites maisons*, with an occasional literary episode and at most a rapid glimpse of politics. But now a fresh subject occupies my pen : amber, musk, powder-puffs, patches and ribbons vanish from my horizon, and I become a Royal emissary, almost an ambassador, travelling by night and upon the most natural vehicle of locomotion along the road to Germany, with an important despatch and a marshal's baton in my pocket, my head full of ambitions of ennoblement, and my feet splashed with mud to the ankles.... for the philanthropic reforms and amendments with which the National Assembly had employed itself during the past two years had not yet been extended to the keeping of our high-roads in regular repair.

And if I bemired myself like this when following one of the most frequented roads of the Kingdom, what must I have thought of that journey "as the bird flies" which His Majesty, seated on the Queen's sofa, had deigned to predict to me? But such was my longing to found the illustrious race of the Barons de Léonard that I attached but slight importance to the assured difficulties and probable dangers of my expedition. For it would have been sheer blind indifference not to have had any fear of being compromised, in a part of the country swarming with citizens playing at National Guards, while I carried upon my person an article covered with those *fleurs-de-lys* which were beginning to arouse suspicion. It might, it is true, have been taken at the first glance for a Rouen sugar-stick, but the inquisitive patriots were not the people to content themselves with an examination of the outside alone, and my baton, divested of its wrapper, would be sure to consign me to some village lock-up, in which my noble posterity would die a still-born death.

While my hopes were being mingled with these apprehensions, I arrived at break of day at the gates of Meaux,\* having taken advantage of some returning post-horses, on which I had been permitted to jog along uneasily, in return for a liberal consideration to the ostlers, to say nothing of certain notable portions of my epidermis, removed from a part which I will not name: but I had succeeded in covering eleven

\* 43 kilometres (26½ miles) from Paris.



leagues\* in three hours, and I resolved to avail myself of this resource as often as possible, despite the suffering my flesh might be compelled to undergo. I encouraged myself to submit to such little bodily sacrifices with the reflection that if so many illustrious families had formerly paid for their title-deeds with their blood shed in battle, I ought not to be too sensitive to a slight waste of the buttocks (I can find no synonym) encountered in the King's service.

The custom of demanding passports was not yet general in the interior of France in June 1791: the apostles of liberty showed themselves as yet economical of measures attacking the principle which they so loudly proclaimed. Nevertheless, a guard was mounted in every village, and travellers were liable to be arrested if their costume or general appearance was in any way out of the ordinary.

Now this was precisely my case. My hair, dressed in the fashion of the *ancien régime*, my clothing, which, without being dandified, recalled to some extent that of the gentry of the Court, drew the attention of the inhabitants whom I encountered on entering Meaux, and I came to the conclusion that if I was already examined with curiosity, I might soon be regarded with disquietude. My decision was taken without delay: a number of carter's smocks hung flapping in the breeze, awaiting a customer, and I purchased one, as though I were a neighbouring landlord, taking care to explain that this rustic garment was wanted for my valet. The same pretence put me in stead, a little further, to buy a striped cotton night-cap, a large, round, flat hat, and a pair of strong brogues, midway between the shoes of a country curate and those of a carter.

Having packed up my purchases, I quietly turned back, retired behind a little plantation to the left of the high-road, and there effected a disguise which would have deceived even those who might have met me on the outskirts of Meaux. My dainty *oiseau royal* was hidden beneath my striped cap covered with the wide six-franc hat; my smock concealed my coat; and my coarse shoes helped to complete my disguise.... The handsome beaver and the buckled shoes which I had discarded I left behind beneath a heap of dried leaves: one would have

\* About 28 miles.

been justified in making a greater sacrifice than this for the safety of the Monarchy.

Thus transmogrified into a clumsy wagoner, with a hazel stick in my hand, I boldly crossed the town in which Bossuet flourished.\* Nobody took notice of me, and I breakfasted safely and copiously in a wagoners' tavern, in the suburb skirting the extreme north of Meaux.

Fortunately, there was no lack of returning post-horses along the road to Château-Thierry and Épernay, nor did I fail to use them. I had thought of hiring, from post to post, a series of those uncomfortable chaises which the post-masters are always able to find for one; but a carter travelling in this fashion might have awakened suspicions. I resigned myself to enduring the cruel apprenticeship which a journey on horseback at full-speed entailed for a coiffeur whose first equestrian attempt clashed as loudly with preconceived notions as does a cavalcade of sailors. A charitable postilion taught me the curative properties of a candle inserted in my breeches. I tried it, and benefited greatly.

Thanks to my disguise, I escaped any disquiet on the road. I was not obliged to travel as the bird flies, any more than to cross rivers by swimming them, an heroic expedient to which I should in no event have been able to resort for want of an acquaintance with the first principles of the art of natation.

On the evening of the 14th of June I reached the little town of Dun-sur-Meuse, and learnt that M. de Bouillé was at Montmédy, which was some three or four leagues further.... I thought it would be imprudent to seek to make my way into a fortified camp at the very entrance to which my secret, in other words the secret of the Court, might be betrayed. I accordingly determined to send a local express to the marshal-elect; but I must take this step in such a way as to attract the general's attention without compromising either him, or myself, or the cause which we both served.

A little shepherd, whom I met on the road, beating the ground with his crook while his sheep were browsing in the surrounding fields, impressed me as looking stupid enough to pass in without inspiring distrust, and nimble enough to

\* Bossuet was Bishop of Meaux from 1681 until his death in 1704.

reach Montmédy before the gates were closed and to bring me a reply early the next morning.

"Hark ye, my lad," said I, addressing him with the roughness natural to a carter, "are you the boy to go to Montmédy to-night and do an errand for which you will be paid beforehand and well paid into the bargain?"

"Ay, good man," replied the young shepherd, "I'll go to Montmédy to-night for ye and come back too."

"Not to-night?"

"Ay, indeed I will.... I'll just tell the officer at the gate that I want to come home to sleep like.... and the toll-keeper knows me, you see, good man...."

"In that case, my lad, you can start at once."

"Ah, but I must first take my sheep back to the farm..."

"That's true. Well, when will you be ready?"

"In less than half an hour."

"I will wait for you at the door of the *Lion d'Argent*, where I am stopping; don't be long."

"No danger of that, good man."

I had prepared my letter for M. de Bouillé beforehand. I have found a copy of it among my papers, and here it is, with the carter's spelling with which I had thought it advisable to reinforce my ordinary mistakes in orthography:

"Monsieur le marquis,

"One of my wagons holds some furniture and trunks which are for you. I have gone before my mate, who is driving it, because I feared I might meet with some trouble from the customs-officers as I got nearer the frontier. And so I pray you, monsieur le marquis, to jump on your horse and come yourself to Dun, where I will wait for you and see that nothing happens to the load I have for you.

"I am, monsieur le marquis, with respect,

"JEAN ROBLIN, carter."

A load of trunks and furniture forwarded to a place where M. de Bouillé was in command was not likely to raise any suspicions of a political intrigue, especially at a time when the marquis, one of the heroes of the American War of Independ-



dence, was regarded without distrust in the Assembly.... On the other hand I hoped that the general, who doubtless expected neither trunks nor furniture from Paris, would readily suspect that some mystery lurked beneath this affair, and that he would at least think it worth while to ride across from that short distance and make sure. The result showed that I was not mistaken.

My young shepherd was punctual at the meeting-place. Seated on the stone bench before the door of the inn, I saw him run up, carrying his clogs in his hand, and quite ready, said he, to cover the distance from Dun to Montmédy in less than two hours, thanks to his freedom from any foot-gear to impede his progress.

I gave the shepherd a big crown of six livres, and promised him another on his return, if he fulfilled my errand intelligently. I next gave him my letter, and off he went.

I chose a room sufficiently removed from the traffic of the inn to enable me to have an interview with M. de Bouillé without being overheard by the goers and comers. It is easily understood that I did not go to bed.

About midnight, a carriage drew up at the door of the inn; I heard a voice asking for the carter who had arrived that morning, and a few seconds later M. de Bouillé entered my room with my little messenger, whom he had brought back behind his post-chaise.

"Is it you, master, who wrote to me?" asked the general, fixing his eyes upon my features, as though he recognized me.

"Yes, monsieur le marquis," I replied, with a wink that clearly meant, "Say nothing until we are alone." And I added, "Let me first pay this honest lad, and send him home to bed: he needs it, I am sure."

"That's true," said the young shepherd, holding out his hand for the second crown of six livres I had promised him; and then, drawing back his mud-covered foot, he thanked me, bowed, and disappeared.

"You are no carter," exclaimed the marquis, stepping towards me when I returned from bolting the door.

"No, monsieur the marshal," I replied, with all the pride of a man entrusted with an important errand.

"Why do you give me that title?"

"Only because I have come to bring you the patent and insignia."

"You are a messenger from the Court," said M. de Bouillé, lowering his voice.

"And this is the present which I bring you from the King."

With these words, I drew the baton, all covered with *fleurs-de-lys*, from under my smock, and handed it to the marquis, together with the Royal despatch, which he opened eagerly.

"You are Monsieur Léonard," cried the general, overcome with joy. "I thought I recognized you. Truly, I might have thought it; you are the only intelligent, I am not sure that you are not the only really devoted person left at the Court of our unhappy King . . . . Well, my dear Monsieur Léonard, embrace me . . . . you are my godfather, since you represent Louis XVI.! . . . And now what have you to tell me? For His Majesty has prepared me for secrets which he was not willing to trust to paper."

"That is so, monsieur le marquis. Pray be seated, and I will tell you all."

I then narrated to the new marshal the proposed flight of the King, with all the arrangements for its execution, in which His Majesty relied upon the assistance of the marquis at the head of the troops under his command.

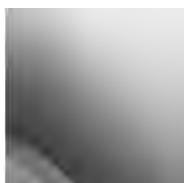
"When does the King propose to start?" asked M. de Bouillé, hurriedly.

"If there has been no change in His Majesty's plans, he will leave the Tuileries on the night of the 19th."

"And the first intimation I receive of it is on the 15th!" cried the marquis, in a stifled voice, turning pale.

"General," said I, in the firm tones of a man who has nothing to reproach himself for, "I left Paris at one o'clock at night on the 13th to fulfil the mission which the King had entrusted to me an hour before, and I was here, at fifty leagues from the capital, on the 14th, at six o'clock in the evening . . . ."

"Nor is it you, my dear Léonard, that I find fault with. Egad! I can see that, with all the difficulties you have had to encounter, your diligence has not been in default. But why did the King not let me know earlier? . . . . How can I now guarantee the safety of this journey? . . . . I ought to have had time to



deploy cavalry secretly along the borders of the roads from here to the gates of Paris, so that in case of any obstacles being placed in the way of His Majesty's journey, my detachments might have been able to cut down that scum of a National Guard and carry away the King from them . . . . By the way, I hope the King comes alone . . . ”

“I think not, monsieur le marquis; I believe that it was arranged by the Royal Family that Madame Elisabeth and the Children of France should be taken to Brussels, but that the Queen was to accompany the King . . . ”

“This is the height of folly and absurdity. By God! the Queen has chosen a bad moment for this display of conjugal heroism.” And M. de Bouillé shrugged his shoulders. “How could the King have listened to such an unfortunate fancy? . . . And here am I left to execute a military movement, the consequences of which it is impossible to foresee, with a woman! . . . My dear Léonard, I am in despair . . . I have the saddest foreboding about the King's journey, and the sorrow all this gives me spoils the honour the King has done me in promoting me . . . Do you return to Paris?” asked M. de Bouillé, sharply.

“It was my intention to await the King, in order to acquaint him with the result of my errand.”

“It would be better for you to go and meet His Majesty. Go as far as you can, short of returning to Paris before the King's journey has succeeded. . . . if it is to succeed,” added the marquis with a sigh. “When you meet the King,” continued M. de Bouillé, speaking with ardour, “be sure to tell His Majesty that I am devoted to his service, and ready to shed the last drop of my blood in aid of his endeavours. Say nothing of the obstacles which I foresee; it is too late now to take any precautions; we must combat them by force, without letting Louis XVI. fear that they will beat us. . . . Adieu; I shall return to Montmédy, and will give my orders to the troops at break of day.”

With these words the Marquis de Bouillé took his leave; I have not seen him since.

## CHAPTER V

The result of a political mission declared on a carriage-step—The patterns—Mademoiselle Bertin's embarrassment—Her advice to the Queen—Count Fersen—The wrong turning—The Queen goes on foot in the mud—The noble coachman—Departure of the Royal Family on the night of the 19th of June, 1791.

CONVINCED that the marquis was right in advising me not to return to Paris before the King's departure, I retraced my steps briskly, so as to meet His Majesty just outside the capital. This journey was more painful than the first; I had to keep to the high-road night and day in order not to miss the King when he came in sight; for there was nothing to tell me that His Majesty had not anticipated the hour of his departure.... In this way, watching and waiting, I arrived within three leagues of Paris.... It was there that the imprudent and useless bustle of a huge travelling-carriage informed me of the presence of the illustrious fugitive.... I trembled for the consequence of the journey when I beheld an enormous berline, heavily loaded, with seated on the box three persons whom it was easy to recognize as soldiers in disguise. This ponderous carriage, rolling slowly along, was followed by a second coach, also loaded like a diligence.

But what was my alarm when I saw that not only did the Queen accompany the King, but that the Children of France were also travelling with His Majesty, and that three or four ladies were packed in the second carriage!

When I recall to mind this veritable caravan, I cannot conceive how Louis XVI. could have travelled as far as Varennes without being recognized and stopped. Moreover, the King took no precaution to keep his flight a secret: I learnt that His Majesty, whose portrait was to be found in everybody's pocket, sat by the window, and sometimes stepped out and walked, and that the Queen was no more careful to hide her remarkable and characteristic face....

I at once recognized Louis XVI., although I met him in the middle of the night; and I called out, from the centre of the high-road :

“I am Léonard.”

“Léonard, Léonard,” came from the back seat of the berlin, in a woman’s voice, which I recognized as that of the Queen . . . and the carriage stopped . . .

The King made me stand on the step, and I told him of my mission with full details, emphasizing all the words of consolation which the marquis had charged me to speak to His Majesty . . . Alas! I filled the monarch and his family with hopes which I myself did not share, especially after I had perceived with what imprudence the Royal Family were travelling . . . The whole of the august family overwhelmed me with thanks, with protestations of gratitude, and with brilliant promises. And finally, as I was taking leave of the King, he said, raising his voice :

“Monsieur Léonard, whatever happens, I hope that we shall soon meet again . . . Should anything unexpected take place, do not forget that we are to meet again.”

Day broke as I entered Paris, and I hastened to get rid of my smock frock. I was eager to know how Their Majesties had effected their escape from the Tuileries, and I hurried to Mademoiselle Bertin, whom I knew to be well-informed in that regard.

“I fear our kind master and mistress will not succeed in their attempt,” said the Queen’s ex-milliner. “I may be mistaken, but it seems to me that their flight is known to the patriots.”

“My dear, what are you saying?”

“Listen, Léonard; you cannot know what has happened since the 13th, as you were away. I myself never left the Château during the four days preceding the departure of the Royal Family, and I noticed a number of imprudences quite sufficient to arouse the suspicions of General de La Fayette.”

“Of him alone?”

“Why do you ask that, Léonard?”

“See here, my dear Rose, I will not conceal from you what I think, however strange my opinion may seem to you . . .”

"Well, what is your opinion?"

"That General de La Fayette is delighted at being freed of his equivocal charge at Court. That well-meaning man was in fact in one of the most false of positions: the patriots accused him of indulgence, and the respectful regard which he always displayed towards Their Majesties has up to the present only won him severity on the King's part and scorn on the Queen's."

"That is true."

"And I naturally conclude that, in order to be relieved from this false position, M. de La Fayette would be only too pleased to witness the departure of the Royal Family."

"There is some truth also in that. I will tell you what happened to me on the morning of the 18th. I was hurriedly crossing the Carrousel to go to the Queen, with my eyes cast down on the pavement, as people do who think as they walk, and I was on the point of knocking up against some one coming in my direction, when, hearing his footstep, I raised my eyes.... It was M. de La Fayette...."

"What a fine day, mademoiselle," said he, with an amiable smile. "It is really too bad to be kept in town when one could derive so much pleasure from the country."

"What keeps you, monsieur le marquis?"

"The most tyrannical of all despots, duty."

"It is true, general, you have accepted one...."

"Which Their Majesties, and the Queen in particular, have a singular opinion of; and I tell you frankly, it is that which renders it so irksome to me."

"Why not rid yourself of it, monsieur le marquis?"

"I see, Mademoiselle Bertin, that you also share the Queen's illusion.... But cannot you understand," continued the general, pressing my arm, "that if I were to yield my office to another, the lot of Their Majesties, painful as it undoubtedly is, would become intolerable?"

"Then, suddenly changing the subject, M. de La Fayette drew from his pocket a little green morocco letter-case, opened it, took from it a paper which he unfolded, and continued, lightly:

"You have great taste, mademoiselle; I must consult you on a subject upon which your opinion is law.... Here are two patterns, one of silk and the other of cloth, which have been

selected by some one of my acquaintance for travelling-dresses . . . .'

"I thought for a moment that the blood would freeze in my veins: the stuffs which the general had shown me were the patterns for the clothes which the King and Queen were having made up for their departure.... However, I would allow neither my bearing nor my features to betray me; and although M. de La Fayette looked at me fixedly, I gave no sign of the violent agitation which devoured my bosom....

"'When people travel in the month of June,' resumed the general, with a smile full of meaning, 'the night-time is preferable to the day, and I should think that light-coloured stuffs are not the best suited to the occasion: what do you think, mademoiselle?'

"'I think, monsieur le marquis, that light colours are not yet quite seasonable this year, when the fine weather is so long in coming, and that your friends would do well to choose some darker shades.'

"'I agree with your opinion, mademoiselle, and I recommend you to impress it upon any one whom you know to be about to make a journey.... Yours to command....'

"Clearly, M. de La Fayette had been informed of the projected flight of the King and his family; but also it was evident that he had no intention of preventing it, for he is well aware that the Queen honours me with her friendship, and the object of his little fable of the patterns was undoubtedly to enable me to give Her Majesty fair warning....

"Yet I felt exceedingly embarrassed. The Queen had not told me of the King's plans: I could not let her know that I had heard of them. How, then, was I to warn Their Majesties of the risk they were running? For M. de La Fayette must have had a motive in speaking to me. I had learnt, Léonard, that you were employed in the execution of this great scheme, but you were already gone to prepare the road; I did not know where to find you, and I was still in want of a medium to bring to the Queen's ears what I had heard.

"Nevertheless, I looked upon this as indispensable: the future might conceal events which would render my silence very reprehensible. I determined to inform Her Majesty, while covering

my communication with the same veil of mystery that M. de La Fayette had cast over his.

“‘Has Your Majesty,’ I asked the Queen on the morning of the 19th, ‘forgotten your toilet for the summer? You have not yet given me my orders; and since there is still time, I must not neglect to tell you that this year light-coloured stuffs have been forbidden by the doctors, both for gentlemen and ladies....’

“‘Why so, Mademoiselle Rose?’ asked Her Majesty, carelessly, not attaching to my words any idea bearing upon her secret expedition.

“‘The gentlemen of the Faculty say, Madame, that the light colour of a stuff presupposes lightness of texture, and that this year especially one should be careful not to commence one’s summer dress too early, particularly in travelling....’

“The Queen looked at me fixedly, and said:

“‘Mademoiselle Rose, it is some more direct reason than the doctors’ opinions that makes you talk to me like that.’

“‘Madame, I assure you....’

“‘You are hinting at something....’

“‘Since Your Majesty guesses the truth, I will tell the whole of it: I am almost certain that the journey which the King and Your Majesty propose to take has become known to M. de La Fayette, and that some unfaithful person has sent him the patterns of the dresses Your Majesties are to wear on the day of your departure....’

“‘M. de La Fayette knows of it!’ cried the Queen. ‘Then we are lost.’

“‘I think not, Madame, for it is the general himself who gave me the warning which I have ventured to express to you; and had his intentions been hostile, he would naturally have refrained from communicating with you....’

“‘That is true.... I do not know what to think.... In any case,’ resumed Her Majesty, sadly, and after a moment’s reflection, ‘we must give up our scheme.’

“‘I would not dare, Madame, to hazard an opinion in so delicate a circumstance, and Your Majesty will doubtless think proper to confer with the King.’

“‘That is what I shall do at once.... But see here, Made-

moiselle Rose, there must be some secret perfidy lurking beneath La Fayette's conduct. Perhaps he means to let us go, with the intention of accusing us afterwards to the Assembly.'

"He would first be accused himself, Madame, and the motive which Your Majesty supposes would only be received by the Assembly as a poor excuse for his negligence, if not his complicity....'

"Your observation is very reasonable, and I am perhaps a little too much prejudiced."

"I was not informed of what happened between the King and Queen that day," continued Mademoiselle Bertin, "but when leaving her illustrious consort, the Queen told me that nothing had been changed in the arrangements, excepting the colour of the travelling-dresses, since it was generally believed in the King's intimate council that M. de La Fayette's warning had reference to a system of espionage outside of his own military government, and that it would be well to frustrate this."

"During the remainder of the day, the Queen deigned to allow me to take part in the preparations for the journey, and I did not leave the Palace until the moment of Their Majesties' departure.

"At about half-past-ten in the evening, the Queen and I were engaged in packing some jewels which she wished to take with her, when a bedchamber-woman came to tell Her Majesty that a gentleman from abroad, and well-known at Court, was urgently asking for an audience. Her Majesty ordered that he should be admitted.

"I have always refused to believe that Marie Antoinette has ever failed in her duty as a wife; but if her heart was ever touched for one single moment, it was assuredly by Count Fersen. And it was the Swedish nobleman who was now ushered into the Queen's room.

"I must be careful how I speak of the impression which the unexpected arrival of Count Fersen made upon Her Majesty. She betrayed a certain emotion; but whatever the cause of it, she promptly overcame it.

"Is that you, monsieur le comte?" said Marie Antoinette, with a dignity that was almost cold. "I thought you were far away from France."

" ' I have been abroad, Madame, and I have returned only for the sake of Your Majesty.... I should say for that of Your Majesty and of your august spouse.... '

" ' I did not understand you to mean differently, monsieur le comte.'

" ' I have been kept supplied with information, Madame, and I learnt that the aid of my devotion might be of use to the King and to Your Majesty.... I have crossed the sea to offer it to you.... '

" The Queen, unable to repress a movement of gratitude, held out her hand to the count, who eagerly seized and respectfully kissed it.

" ' I know of the King's plans, Madame, and it is mainly to forward their execution that I have come.'

" ' But how could you have learnt of our plans.... abroad.'

" ' Alas ! God grant that the little care taken to conceal them may have allowed them to penetrate to none but your friends... '

" ' Have you any fear that they have come to the knowledge of our enemies ? '

" ' I fear so, Madame, but I am not certain, and I hope at least that it will be possible to escape their vigilance, if the King will deign to rely upon me first to assist Your Majesties to leave Paris, and then for the management of the journey. It is necessary that no one should be able to follow your carriage for two hours together without losing trace of it ; that it should be seen now on the road to England, now on the road to Germany, thanks to the cross-roads that join the two until the frontier is reached. If the King will deign to accept me as his coachman, I will pledge my life to lead you without accident to the end of your journey.... '

" ' I will tell him of your offer, monsieur le comte ; in any case, His Majesty will appreciate your devotion to our persons and our cause.... '

" ' Ah, let me implore you, Madame, to tell the King that all my blood is at his service.... '

" ' I shall not fail to do so, Count Fersen.... But leave me now : if our jailers were to see you, you might run serious danger.'

" ' I can face any danger to serve you, Madame, but nothing would console me if I lost the occasion.... '

"With these words the Swedish officer withdrew through the private entrance. The Queen, in taking leave of him, said, in a voice that seemed to me changed :

"Till to-morrow, Count Fersen....' And then she added, dropping her voice still lower, 'We leave at midnight.'

"The next day," continued Mademoiselle Bertin, "the Queen took the arm of a Garde du Corps to leave the Palace. This soldier, doubtless preoccupied by the fear of danger, or by the pride which he took in his temporary mission, left the courtyard through the wicket leading on to the quay, while the carriages stood waiting on the Carrousel, at the end of the Rue Saint-Nicaise. Marie Antoinette, herself greatly preoccupied by the dangers with which she was surrounded, did not notice that her escort was leading her across the Pont Royal, and it was not until they were close to the Rue du Bac that Her Majesty suspected, rather from the length of the road they had traversed than from the aspect of the street, which was quite unknown to her, that they must have mistaken their direction.

"'Monsieur!' said the Queen, stopping short, 'where are you leading me to? We are not in the Carrousel.'

"'I had just perceived my mistake,' replied the soldier, quite at his ease; 'but the night is dark, and I do not know the town well....'

"'It is no great misfortune; only let us hasten back. I fear we have kept the King waiting, and if he knows that I left the Palace at the same time as himself, he must be exceedingly anxious.'

"The Queen and the Garde du Corps recrossed the Pont Royal, almost at a run, passed through the second wicket, instead of returning through the first, and began to cross the Carrousel diagonally in order more quickly to reach the Rue Saint-Nicaise. Near the centre of the square a group of officers passed by the Queen; one of them, whom Her Majesty recognized as M. de La Fayette, almost touched her with his elbow, and turned round a little. None of the officers seemed to recognize the illustrious fugitive.

"At last Marie Antoinette and her escort reached the carriages. The King had been waiting for more than a quarter

of an hour, a prey to inexpressible anxiety. Count Fersen was there, disguised as a coachman; and as he was preparing to mount the box, the King said to him, in firm, sharp tones:

“‘Remember what I have said, monsieur: only as far as the barrier. You will leave us there.... Your life now belongs to His Majesty Gustavus III.; you have no right to risk it in the service of another sovereign.’

“‘Sire,’ replied M. de Fersen, in a choking voice, ‘I will obey Your Majesty.’

The Queen said nothing. I am inclined to think that she feared that Louis XVI. might have some other motive than that alleged by him for repelling the count’s devotion.... Her silence was dictated by a feeling of propriety. At last, all the Royal Family having taken their places in the big berline, while the Queen’s ladies stepped into the second chariot, the carriages moved off, and I was seized with a fit of trembling at the shock which those heavy coaches gave to the pavement.... For I was standing ten steps away from the illustrious fugitives at the moment of this nocturnal departure: the Queen had granted me permission to follow her at a short distance from the moment when she left the Château until the departure of the horses. Twenty times, while the Garde du Corps was leading the Queen towards the Rue du Bac, was I on the point of running after her and saying, ‘Madame, you are not going the right way.’ But not only was I certain that Her Majesty could rely upon the soldier’s fidelity, but I feared to frighten my Sovereign by running forward so suddenly.... Imagine my alarm, Léonard, when in the middle of the Carrousel I saw General de La Fayette almost touching the Queen with his elbow.... I thought Their Majesties were lost; my thoughts were full of the idea of treachery, and I exclaimed aloud, ‘The perfidious man!’ But at the same moment that the words came from my lips, La Fayette and his officers turned aside, as though to show that they did not wish to hinder Marie Antoinette. At the distance at which I stood, it was quite clear to me that this was the general’s intention.... I felt convinced that he had been informed of the King’s flight, and had decided to allow it to take place.

“While the Royal Family were stepping into the carriage, I was at six paces from them, hidden behind a corner of the hoarding

which closes off the Carrousel on that side. I could distinctly hear every word spoken at that solemn moment, and I did not go away until the dull rumbling sound of the two carriages had died away in the distance. My servant was waiting for me in the Rue de l'Échelle ; I joined him, and returned home at about one o'clock in the morning. You can readily believe, my dear Léonard, that my repose that night was neither calm nor prolonged ; and what you have just told me of the Marquis de Bouillé's apprehensions does not contribute to reassure me."

## CHAPTER VI

I endeavour to excuse M. de Bouillé to the Queen—Her Majesty's sinister forebodings—Marie Antoinette and Barnave—The maladroit friends of the Court—The sublime devotion of the Princesse de Lamballe—The horrible news of her assassination—The principal reason for my departure for England—Maria Theresa's diamonds.

ALL the world knows how the Royal Family were stopped at Varennes and brought back to the Tuilleries.... As soon as I heard of this melancholy return, although it in no way surprised me, after the inexpressible imprudence with which the departure had been prepared and effected, I hastened to the Palace. Mademoiselle Bertin was there before me, and I found her in the Queen's room.

"Well, Léonard," said Her Majesty, "I have come back. In spite of all your zeal, M. de Bouillé could not find the means to have us escorted in time; and what is so difficult to believe, he was not able to deliver us when we were arrested, although there was only a handful of peasants around us.... They were valiant hands in which you placed the baton of a Marshal of France."

"I would only venture to make one observation to Your Majesty. The departure was delayed by twenty-four hours; the officer in command of the troops which were to advance into France may have thought that the King had changed his intentions; and the corps, marching without instructions from the Minister of War, could not penetrate into the heart of the Kingdom without compromising Your Majesties.... For in this circumstance it would have been too dangerous to urge an order received direct from the King...."

"True," said Marie Antoinette, bitterly, "an order from the Sovereign is not sufficient, now that France has twelve hundred kings.... Besides," added the Queen, sadly, "our destinies are

written on High, and I truly believe that God sometimes sends us mysterious warnings in our sleep.... I dreamt of you last night, my dear Rose," turning towards Mademoiselle Bertin. "You were bringing me ribbons of all colours, and I chose several. But as soon as I had taken them in my hands, they turned black, and I threw them back into your boxes in horror. I took up others: green, white, and lilac, and no sooner did I hold them, than they became covered with the colour of death. I was weaker in that dream than I am ordinarily: I began to weep, and you wept also, for you loved me in my dream as well as you love me in reality."

"That dream is not surprising after the disagreeable event which we all deplore," replied Mademoiselle Bertin; "but please God, it contained nothing that is real except my respectful attachment for Your Majesty...."

"You are wrong, Rose," said the Queen, turning her head away slightly, "the cannibals of the 5th and 6th of October will force their way into my apartments again.... they will murder me."

"Good God! Madame, suppress that horrible thought!" exclaimed Mademoiselle Bertin and I.

"I cannot, my friends," resumed Her Majesty, slowly. "I try to banish those melancholy forebodings, but they return incessantly.... I feel almost certain that I shall be murdered.... Oh! Heaven grant at least that the hideous tragedy may not take place at the feet of the King! If I was their only victim, and if my death could fix the Crown firmly upon my son's head, I would gladly shed my blood for him.... But I am wrong to trouble you thus," said the Queen, after a short interruption; "let us change the subject. I must tell you that the only result of our voyage, apart from the complete imprisonment which it has gained for us, is a very bad cold which has fallen to my lot.... That good Garde du Corps, whose devotion, alas! will perhaps cost him dear, made me walk in the gutter of the Rue du Bac, and my feet were wet all through the night.... It is long, I should think, since such a thing happened to a Queen of France...."

I here pass over a space of several months, preferring to interrupt the thread of my narrative rather than linger over

a sequence of events so often related by the historians and memoir-writers....

I come to the early part of October 1791. At this time a very remarkable change, and one which she certainly wished to have remarked, had come over, I will not say the character, but rather the habits, or as some think, the policy of Marie Antoinette. Her Majesty seemed to have laid aside that air of grandeur, commonly qualified as pride, of which the Parisians had made so lasting a grievance. The Queen moved about in her apartments amongst the bourgeois militia, posted in the Palace as a guard of safety rather than a guard of honour; she talked familiarly with the officers and even the private soldiers, questioning them as to their families, their position, their happiness, expressing wishes for its increase, and showing a desire to add to these worthy men's comfort.

These attempts at popularity dated from the return from Varennes. There was no doubt but that it was the result of a deliberate system, even if it were not taken into account that Barnave,\* one of the commissioners whom the Legislative Assembly had sent to bring back the Royal Family from Varennes, was endeavouring to reconcile the King and Queen with the Revolution. It has been said that this eloquent young deputy became enamoured of Marie Antoinette, and therefore strove to turn her thoughts from that Counter-Revolution, in which she was becoming more and more involved through an impulse which was unreasonably qualified as treachery. Barnave, who was a sincere patriot, but at the same time a sympathetic spectator of the dangerous position of the King and his family, tried, it is true, to forestall the terrible calamities which were lowering, like a storm, over the heads of those august persons; but I think that one should relegate to the region of romantic anecdote the story of the tribune's love for his sovereign. The truth of the matter is rather as follows.

\*Pierre Joseph Marie Barnave, 1761—1793, one of the more attractive figures on the revolutionary side. He and Pétion returned from Varennes in the Royal carriage, and it was from the time of that journey that his conversion dated. He became Mayor of Grenoble, his birth-place, and was there arrested on the 19th of August 1792, after the discovery of his correspondence with the Court. He spent 15 months in prison at Grenoble, and was then taken to Paris and guillotined. His defence during his trial was a very remarkable piece of eloquence.

Barnave was not long in discovering that the *ancien régime* was so "deep-rooted in the affections and habits of the King, and still more of the Queen, that it would not be possible to induce them to entertain for a moment the thought of any other system of government. He lost all hope, therefore, and confined his efforts to saving them from destruction, while striving to avoid any loss of his own popularity in the Assembly. But if the deputy for Grenoble despaired of bringing round Louis XVI. and Marie Antoinette to the theory of constitutional government, the Queen, with greater confidence in her powers of persuasion, hoped to enrol him under the banner of the Counter-Revolution. This was perhaps the first time that Her Majesty had made any display of political coquetry; and its partial success ended by leading Barnave to the scaffold by a road in which he saw, and refused to avoid, the pitfalls. He was compromised before being entirely conquered by the Counter-Revolution, and retired to the country, but too late: his name was inscribed on Robespierre's bloody list.... His noble heart beat with too much energy to be spared by the man who was the enemy of intelligence rather than of rank.

In Barnave, Louis XVI. and Marie Antoinette lost the member of the Assembly who best understood their interest. The eloquence of the Cazalès \* and Chapelliers did them more harm than that of their most determined antagonists; but this both the King and Queen refused to see. Yet nothing was more clearly proved. The orations of the Royalist deputies all went to show that the executive power was not a duty of the government, but a party lying perpetually armed, as it were, in ambush, ready to dart out upon the Constitution which it had sworn to carry out and to defend.... The great misfortune of the unhappy Royal Pair was that, with but few exceptions, they had none but friends who were either wrong-headed, or stupid, or lacking either in energy or in prudence. Among those partisans of the Throne who were not able to act as its defenders, there

\* Jacques Antoine Marie de Cazalès, 1752—1805, one of the deputies of the nobility, was a celebrated and very fine orator on the Royalist side. He fought a bloodless duel with Barnave in 1790, before the latter's conversion. After the Varennes catastrophe, Cazalès left France, and joined the French Princes, under whom he fought throughout the campaign of 1792. He returned in 1803 two years before his death. His speeches and opinions were collected, in one volume, in 1821.

were doubtless many heroes of devotion and fidelity; but there were scarcely any who were really gifted: and in a revolution, where all the strength is in the hands of the masses, talent is the only quality that stands a chance of succeeding against them.

On the other hand, the less devotion is distinguished by personal talent, the more remarkable do we find it for greatness of mind and true heroism. I have already told how Madame la Princesse de Lamballe, shortly after the removal of the Court to the Tuileries, had gone abroad to seek alliances against the revolutionary movement.... Alas! Louis XVI. could not have employed an ambassadress less likely to succeed in her mission. The Princess, with all the virtues which cause us to esteem her sex, had none of the qualities that constitute its power. No doubt she was very beautiful; but her beauty was not one that permitted its admirers to pay any homage but that of the eyes, and that distant worship is not sufficient to enable ladies to triumph over the obstacles which encumber their path.

Marie Thérèse Louise de Carignan was in England in the month of September 1791, and followed in the French newspapers the sad falling-off in the power of Louis XVI. She saw how danger was crowding around the Royal Family, and finally, reproaching herself for having left them, resolved to return to France, whatever the danger to which she might be exposing herself....

One evening in October, a cold, wet evening, I went to the Tuileries to report to the Queen upon an errand she had confided to me the day before. Her Majesty was doing needle-work in a small drawing-room on the ground-floor, with Madame Campan by her side. The King was sitting before a scanty fire, with the young Dauphin on his knees, whom he was instructing in elementary geography. One might have thought them some good Breton family, living peacefully in their old castle, and spending the winter evening in domestic quietude. The rain beat violently against the window-panes on the garden side, the servants having neglected to close the shutters; and the wet wind whistled through the branches of the great chestnut-trees, which were already bare of leaves.

According to the custom which the Queen had permitted me

to adopt, I entered without being announced by the officers on duty, after gently scratching at the door. Though Marie Antoinette had always refused to embrace constitutional principles, assuredly no sovereign was ever so easy of access or so affable as she became towards the closing years of her life.... Often, when I had been long distances on foot for Her Majesty, she made me sit down in her presence in order to tell her of the result of my excursion. "The etiquette of Versailles was left behind us when we quitted that Palace," she would say, with a laugh, "and the wife of the 'Nation's head-clerk,' as a Patriot orator recently remarked, should find a seat for all the world in her room."

I told the Queen that a travelling-carriage had drawn up before the Pavillon de l'Horloge as I entered the Palace.

"A travelling-carriage!" cried Marie Antoinette, in surprise. "I can't think who it can be."

"Some distinguished emigrant," said Louis XVI., "some gentleman of my former Court, profiting by the amnesty pronounced by the Assembly at La Fayette's desire, and returning to France to devote himself to our service."

"Or to avoid the confiscation of his property," added the Queen, with a caustic smile.

At that moment the door opened, and there appeared to our eyes Madame la Princesse de Lamballe.

One of the undying remembrances of my life will be the picture which I have preserved of that unexpected apparition. I shall always see before me the sweet, noble face, pale with the fatigue of the journey, but lit up with an expression of the tenderest attachment.... A hundred times have I seen again in my dreams Madame de Lamballe as she appeared to us then, wearing a bewitching English beaver hat, turned up at the side with black silk cording, and with three black feathers nodding above it. With this hat, which admirably threw up her complexion, Her Highness wore a little wadded coat, fastened in front with bows of ribbon, which, in spite of the thickness of its lining, failed to spoil the elegant outline of the Princess's figure.... I left for England soon after, and I never set eyes on Madame de Lamballe again. But the charming portrait which I have just drawn has always been accompanied in my thoughts by

another recollection. One morning in 1792, I was strolling slowly down Piccadilly, in London, when I saw a crowd pressing round a print-seller's window. I drew nearer, and I saw a gruesome picture representing a woman's head carried upon a pike. Beneath it was written, "Murder of the Princess of Lamballe." Since then I have never ceased to have these two effigies of the Princess before my eyes: one gentle, smiling, topped with that rakish little hat; the other dishevelled, with writhing features, the eyes starting from the head, and the face dripping with blood.... A hideous comparison....

I have mentioned too early my departure for abroad. Let me return to the events which necessitated it, and the circumstances by which it was preceded. Towards the close of the year 1791, when the Palace of the Tuilleries had become nothing better than a prison to the Royal Family, the Queen one evening sent for me, and after dilating, with some vehemence, upon the terrible situation in which she and the King were placed, ended by informing me, with tears, that the result of this extremity to which they were reduced was a state of imperious and pressing need, which Their Majesties were unable to provide for.

"You will be convinced of the truth of what I say, my dear Léonard, when I tell you that I am obliged to sell part of my own diamonds in order to meet our expenses."

"My heart bleeds for Your Majesty," I exclaimed, in a voice broken by sobs.

"My poor Léonard, your zeal and devotion have never failed us. I expect a new and striking proof of this from you to-day; for I have something to ask you which will perhaps vex you."

"Nothing could vex me, Madame, which Your Majesty thinks right to command me."

The Queen took from her secrétaire a casket of green shagreen leather, and handed it to me open.

"These diamonds," continued Her Majesty, "have never cost France a penny. They are the stones I brought with me from Vienna in 1770, and nobody has the right to prevent me from making what use of them I please. Take them to England, Léonard. In London you will easily find a jeweller who will purchase this casket from you. I rely entirely upon your intelligence for your management of this business, and upon your

integrity for the account that you will render me.... When you have sold them, pay the proceeds to the London representative of Vandenyver, who will see that they are remitted to their proper destination. When this is done, await my instructions in London; they shall be sent you without delay. It is essential that you should start speedily: the Assembly has withdrawn its decree as to passports, but this formality may soon be re-established, and then your voyage could not take place... and this would distress me greatly, for I am entirely dependent upon its result."

"Madame," I replied, eagerly, "I shall soon have made my arrangements for departure: if Your Majesty will only give me four and twenty hours."

"That is well, Léonard: I expected no less from your devotion. Such zeal, such perseverance displayed in our service shall not go unrewarded...."

"Ah! Madame, the best reward Your Majesty can extend to me is to believe that I am sufficiently rewarded by the confidence which you place in me."

"Go, then; the day will come, I hope, when we shall be Sovereigns once more, to the advantage of our friends and the confusion of our enemies."

I left the palace at ten o'clock in the evening, and without waiting for the morrow, commenced making my preparations for departure.

## CHAPTER VII

My arrival in London—The Golden Cannon—English soup—Fricassee of chicken—Madame T. . . .—The artificial flower-makers and the priests—The Chevalière d'Éon in London—I meet Julie, the fairy of the Théâtre Nicolet.

AT the close of 1791, I had given up my profession for more than twelve months. The titled beauties were emigrating by the hundred; the mansions in the Faubourg Saint-Germain, the Faubourg Saint-Honoré and the Île Saint-Louis were deserted; grass grew between the paving-stones of their court-yards . . . . My young pupils, the lady's maids, had become citizenesses; the valets-de-chambre whom I had taught the use of the comb changed it for the sword of Latour's Dragoons or Wurmser's Hussars: \* whence we may draw the conclusion that the former had turned "Patriot," while the latter had preferred to continue aristocratically-disposed and to emigrate with their masters. And indeed it was a matter for congratulation that the army beyond the Rhine was reinforced by arrivals of valets, wig-makers, hackney-coachmen and footmen; for without this levy of plebeian recruits, the so-called Royal army would have contained none but colonels and generals.

I was able therefore to shut up my house without any fear of injuring the progress of the art of hair-dressing, an art, alas! ruined for many a long year. Political exaltation drove men to affect long beards and greasy hair. True, I felt some regret

\* There are so many Latour families (*La Tour du Pin-Gouvernet*, *La Tour du Pin-Montauban*, *La Tour d'Auvergne*, *Latour-Maubourg*, &c.) that it is dangerous to hazard a guess at the owner of this regiment of Latour's Dragoons. The probability is that it was commanded by Marie Victor Fay, Marquis de Latour-Maubourg, 1756—1850, who subsequently fought under Napoleon, and was for two years Minister for War under Louis XVIII. Wurmser, of course, was the brave Austrian general, Dagobert Sigismund Count von Wurmser, 1724—1797, who gained a certain number of successes against the revolutionary troops in 1793. But he was eventually badly beaten by Buonaparte, to whom he capitulated at Mantua on the 2nd of February 1797. He died shortly afterwards, while Commander of the Forces in Hungary.

for that town of Paris, which had always proved so gentle, so caressing to me ; and I regretted still more my little Lucette, of whom I have told you, and with whom I was now fervently in love (how much more foolish is folly, the older the head it affects !).... I felt strongly inclined to take the adorable actress with me ; but apart from the necessity of acting with mystery in the foreign missions which might be confided to me by the Court of the Tuileries, whose secrets I was not entitled to communicate to my mistress, a woman in the midst of armies is always a very compromised article of luggage. And so I left Lucette behind, reserving the right to send for her later.

After collecting all the capital which I was able to realize, I purchased letters of credit for ten thousand louis on London and Amsterdam. The Queen's diamonds, which might be worth some 350,000 livres, I divided and carefully concealed among my luggage. I set out on the 27th of December 1791, leaving my brother Vilanot\* to administer such fortune as I possessed in goods and real estate ; but he was destined soon to be relieved from this care by the confiscation of the property of all those who were either emigrants or regarded as such.

I arrived in London on the 30th of December, and alighted at the Golden Cannon in Piccadilly, an inn which was at that time considered the best in London, at least among the French visitors. I was told that I should there find the Parisian *cuisine* in all its perfection. But the trial which I made that same night of the so-called French cookery did not tend to confirm that statement. I asked for some thick soup, and was served with a decoction of an alarming paleness, in which swam three great slices of half-cooked beef, which I left untasted. I hoped to discover more genuine proofs of the inspiration of our *cordons bleus* in a fricassee of chicken *à la française*, at it was described in the bill of fare. They brought me this would-be fricassee, and it consisted of a few bits of fowl stewed in water and served dry. I enquired for the sauce ; they pointed to a glass bottle,

\* Vilanot was one of Léonard's two brothers. Their surname was Autier, but they were always known, and always signed their names, as Léonard and Vilanot. After Léonard's departure for abroad, Vilanot undertook the charge of Marie Antoinette's toilette ; and his career was brought to an abrupt and unpleasant termination by the guillotine in 1793.

which the waiter had just placed on the table.... I poured a few drops of bottled seasoning on my plate, and I was well-advised to take it distrustfully, for no highway robber of the Forest of Bondy\* ever took unoffending traveller by the throat more violently than did this fatal sauce.... I swallowed the remainder of the fragments of chicken that had been brought me with plain salt, and pretended to have supped, after washing down my insipid repast with three glasses of so-called port, which burnt my gullet, so strongly did the alcohol overpower the natural quality of the wine....

"O industrious and learned British nation! how badly you feed and lodge your neighbours!" I exclaimed, as I stretched myself upon a bed which did no more credit to the art of the upholsterer than did the fricassee of chicken to the art of the kitchen.... Nevertheless I slept, as I had supped, through force of necessity. But the next morning, on awaking, I said to myself, "I must look for a French lodging-house."

This idea of personal comfort was not, however, what guided my first steps in London: I first thought of how to execute the Queen's orders. Her Majesty had explained to me the needs which were to be provided for by the sale of the diamonds, and nothing seemed to me more urgent than that I should cause to be remitted to France the proceeds of this sale. But I did not know one word of English, and the French language was far from being as widely spoken in London as has since become the case. The emigration could not but have brought to London a number of people whom I had known in France; but how to find them? My old partner Frémont was dead.

Suddenly I remembered that the former Court purveyor of feathers and flowers, who had recently closed her Paris warehouse in order to follow a large number of her illustrious debtors abroad, was carrying on in London her Paris industry, to which this lady, who possessed great commercial activity and intelligence, had added a trade in all the articles which have to do with women's toilet.

I asked for Madame T.'s address; she was well-known, and the first person of whom I enquired showed me her

\*Seven miles from Paris, and long infected with thieves. As who should say Hounslow Heath.

door, which was in Piccadilly, at thirty paces from the Golden Cannon.

Madame T. had the use of a whole house. Her show-rooms were on the ground- and first-floors; the work-rooms of the flower- and feather-makers were on the second; and on the third, which in London is called the "garret," \* slept the whole colony of pretty work-girls whom Madame T. had brought with her from France. I could write a fine novel, or rather a fine series of novels, if I cared to set down the adventures of these young emigrants from the Rue Saint-Denis. Among them there was more than one beauty formerly celebrated at the Opera, whose fortune had sunk lower and lower until she came to seek refuge on a humble truckle-bed in a garret in Piccadilly; but on the other hand, the self-same garret was also the starting-point of many a dark-eyed, slender-waisted, slim-footed destiny, which led, by easy windfalls, to a brilliant mansion in one of the squares....

I was heartily welcomed by Madame T. Our business relations at Paris had covered a period of not less than eighteen or nineteen years, and had led to good profits for both of us. Whenever a lady of the Court conceived a whim sufficiently extravagant to open out to me a profit of two hundred per cent, I would excite her, stir her up with all my might, and promise to content her caprice before it had had time to evaporate. Then I would go to Madame T., and say:

"Good news: there is an 'impossible' order for us to-day."

"I will send it you two hours before the time fixed," replied the energetic business-woman.

And we would divide between us the two hundred per cent profit, while keeping up our reputation as the fairies of the toilet....

"You in London!" cried Madame T., whom I found in one of her show-rooms, surrounded by a circle of French priests, a somewhat singular company, I thought, for a dealer in artificial feathers and flowers.... She penetrated through her black *entourage*, and coming towards me, whispered:

"This must seem very strange to you; and yet these good ecclesiastics are clients who come to me every day from France.

\* *Les garettes.*

Every packet brings me two or three of them. Truly, I do not know how I have come by these customers; but they have adopted me, in much the same fashion as the locksmiths' or farriers' mates adopt the good old woman whom they call their mother at the sign of the *Grand Saint-Éloi*.\* Sometimes also I receive visits from very titled people, as destitute of money and even shirts as they are rich in quarterings. The women of quality whom I used to supply at the French Court are lavish with introductions of gentlemen in whom they are interested: that is their way of paying the interest on the money they owe me. These payments on account have not saved me from having already had to disburse a considerable number of guineas stamped with the features of His Gracious Majesty King George III, independently of the hospitality in kind which I extend to the good priests over yonder."

"What, my dear lady," I exclaimed, in surprise, "do you harbour at your own expense all those pious veterans of the priesthood?"

"What am I to do, my dear Léonard? A fair wind from Normandy brings them to England with no hope save an unpledged conscience, no resource save my address, no capacity for work save the gout or chronic catarrh. How can I close my door to them, when I know that no other will be opened for them? And so I said to my young ladies, 'You must pack yourselves more closely in your rooms, sleep two in a bed, and make over half of your garrets to these men of God.' You can imagine that the dangers arising from this proximity are not great. The youngest among them is seventy; and by the height of good fortune, they are all deaf, which prevents their hearing any indecent remarks or proposals which might emanate from the rooms occupied by those young ladies. But let us speak of yourself: what good errand brings you to London?"

"I am here, dear Madame T., in as awkward and helpless, but not as poverty-stricken a position as your worthy Norman priests. Nevertheless I am commissioned by the Queen with the conduct of an important business," and I told her of it.

"Poor Queen!" said the good Frenchwoman, turning up her eyes. "To be reduced to such a strait! I can think of none

\* St. Eligius, the patron of smiths. His feast falls on the 1st of December.

but the jeweller William (as we will call him) who can do your business. My eldest son will take you to him whenever you please, and act as interpreter while you conclude your bargain."

"I accept your offer gratefully, and if M. T. is not too busy to-morrow morning, I will come and beg him to take me to William's...."

"Busy! What do you think, Léonard, is my son's most serious business at present? He is taking lessons in fencing with a lady."

"Allegorically speaking."

"Not at all, I am speaking literally: my son has become the pupil of a lady in the use of the foils."

"Ah! egad, I have it: you are speaking of the Chevalière d'Éon."

"Precisely."

"And so that androgynous person, who has kept the world talking so long, is now in London?"

"Yes, only unfortunately for her or him, the world speaks of her no longer; whence comes that the poor chevalière, abandoned not only by the public but by the powers that be, is compelled to live as the rats do, by nibbling at her library.... The folios are already eaten up, there are no quartos left, and the octavos are commencing to follow the rest."

"And this after playing so great a part on the political stage!"

"She was playing a less dignified one recently on the stage of the London opera-house...."

"But surely not a singing-part; Mademoiselle d'Éon is blessed with the least harmonious voice that ever grated through a human gullet."

"No, it was in the quality of a *virtuosa* in the art of arms that Mademoiselle d'Éon appeared at the Opera, in an assault with M. Sainville.... Pitiful to think of a descendant of the illustrious family of Clermont-Tonnerre rigged out in the costume of Joan of Arc, and fencing upon the boards for fifty guineas, after having had access to every diplomatic cabinet in Europe. To return to your commission, my son will be happy to go to William's with you to-morrow, as he will tell you himself at dinner; for you will stay to dinner...."

"With pleasure, madame . . . "

"Meanwhile I will have you shown round my work-rooms . . . and I will ask your leave to return to those gentlemen." And Madame T. nodded towards the good priests, who had discreetly retired to one of the windows during our conversation.

A cutter came down in answer to Madame T.'s bell. She told him to show me round, and I followed him to the second floor.

I had never in Paris seen so active a flower-manufactory.

"They think," said the cutter, who seemed an intelligent youth, "that we only make bouquets and garlands here. If the English ladies knew that we made all the different sorts of flowers ourselves, they would cease to buy them . . . To listen to them, one would think that the climate of the British Isles was as unsavourable to the production of artificial pinks and roses as to the growth of these flowers in their natural state . . . But it is so easy to deceive titled credulity in this country! Our goods are in just the same case as the wines of Tokay or the Hermitage, of which a hundred times more is sold in Europe than the vintage produces: we sell some hundred thousand francs' worth . . . We even invent families and species to stimulate the caprices of the English: nothing is so prolific as our flora of cambric or muslin . . . And the charming English-women cry out in amazement at the endless resources of creation! See," continued my guide, "I will show you the providence to whom all this praise is due . . . It does, in fact, create with great facility; but," added the young man, with a sigh, "I am paid to realize that it does not so easily re-create what is wasted."

I watched the cutter attentively while he was uttering these last words. His way of expressing himself was not that of a man brought up in a flower-maker's workshop, and his distinguished appearance confirmed me in the opinion that he had suffered the shipwreck of his fortunes through some gust of the wind of adversity.

Meantime, my guide led me to a small, and almost elegantly furnished room, in which the forewoman was seated at work. Her head was bent over her work-table as I approached, and she did not seem to perceive me.

"Mademoiselle Julie," said the cutter, "look up; here is M.

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Léonard, who has done us the honour to visit our work-rooms."

"Léonard!" exclaimed the workwoman.

"Julie!" cried I.

The work-table was thrown over, and Madame T.'s forewoman was in my arms, pressing me to her heart, while my guide watched us with the strangest expression of bewilderment on his face.... What more shall I tell you? I had met again at the end of 1791, in London, my mistress of 1769.... the fairy of the Théâtre Nicolet.... the head upon which I had laid the foundation-stone of my fortune.

## CHAPTER VIII

### Julie's Story.

"YES, Monsieur Léonard, it is I," said the flower-maker, overcome with emotion, keeping my two hands captive in hers; "it is the pretty little Julie of the Théâtre Nicolet, only with twenty-two years added to her age."

"Which do not prevent me," I gaily interrupted, "from still seeing before me the beautiful Julie."

"Beautiful, if you will," she replied, vivaciously. "You meet here and there with monuments which are beautiful through their very age. But at forty, a woman who has had food for reflections, knows exactly what to think of her charms and of their power.

"My work for the day is done," continued Julie, laying down her nippers on the work-table. "There are still three hours before dinner-time. Sit down on that ricketty chair, Monsieur Léonard, and I will tell you the story of my life. It is a curious story, and I assure you it would make a very pretty novel, without altering the truth in the slightest, or in any way embroidering the facts of which it has pleased God to compose it. You know that, my dear Stanislas," said Julie, addressing the cutter: "you might even say of it, '*Et quorum pars magna fui.*' You look surprised, Monsieur Léonard; but you must know that there have been long years in my life during which I had nothing better to do than to study Latin.... What a strange destiny, was it not, for a boulevard dancer.... yet nothing is more true: *Sic fata volvuntur....*" Then, turning once more to him whom she had called Stanislas, a curiously feudal name for a cutter, she said to him, "Please see that Lady Spencer's \*

\* Spenser in the original.

wreath is finished: she is an old friend, and I promised that she should have it punctually."

"Lady Spencer an old friend of Julie the dancer," said I to myself, while the forewoman was giving Stanislas her instructions. "By what chain of adventure can such a friendship have been formed? Lady Spencer is that charming Englishwoman whose arrival in France created a sensation some years ago, whose wealthy display turned fifty of our great ladies green with envy, and who had twenty of the most exalted noblemen of the Court madly and hopelessly in love with her.... Yes, Julie's story should be decidedly entertaining: I long to hear it."

Julie rose to give some orders in the work-rooms, and returned and sat down by my side. We were alone, and she commenced her narrative somewhat in these words:

"Blinded by the smoke of the incense which Paris burnt before the god of hair-dressing in the year of grace 1771, you lost sight of your little Julie, towards whom you had, with the assistance of a certain marchioness, been most unfaithful, a crime which Julie, for that matter, had repaid you with interest. It may therefore have escaped your attention that next year I joined the Opera, where, thanks to the fairy reputation which you had made for me, and which I managed to sustain pretty well, I obtained some success. But I was only able to play the Danaë through an occasional stroke of good luck, and I captured but a casual few of the men. There were then at the Opera, Guimard, Duthé, Dervieu, Sophie Arnould, who resembled the leading advocates at the bar: it was they who obtained all the great cases in the court of Cythera, leaving us lesser lights only a comparatively insignificant practice.

"Nevertheless, I seemed to perceive one evening that a glass, directed from the balcony to the stage, followed all the movements which I made in unison with the rest of the *corps de ballet*, from which I had not yet emerged, for want of a sufficiently powerful protector. Two days after, I observed the same tactics, the same determination on the part of the man with the opera-glass to follow me through the involved medley of the dancers. I attached to this circumstance all the importance which any lady of the Opera, who has yet to make her way,

attaches to the search of a protector. I took advantage of a moment's rest to slip behind my companions, and from the front of the wings on the left-hand side of the audience, I saw, as clearly as the shimmer of the foot-lights enabled me, that my admirer was a man of some forty years of age, with square-cut features, and a serious and pensive air. There was not much love displayed on that face; but as I perceived, from the seven or eight crosses which hung beneath that essentially Teutonic head, that I had fixed the attention of some baron of the Holy Roman Empire, I prepared myself beforehand to accept his passion for what it was worth; no woman need ever be at a loss for the appendices of love, whatever part of the world she dwell in.

“While I was endeavouring to catch a thought upon my admirer's impassive physiognomy, he spied me standing as near to him as it is possible for an actor to be to the spectators in the balcony. What you had been pleased to call my beauty eight or ten months earlier became more clearly visible to his eyes, and I saw something like a flame light up in them. ‘Even a Saxon or a Prussian is capable of being excited,’ said I to myself.

“So long as I remained in the front of the stage, the opera-glass never left me; but when I saw that my admirer had had an opportunity to note my features and the shape of my figure in full detail, I returned to the body of the ballet; a retreat which was full of coquetry and very well adapted to the situation, as Monsieur Léonard, with his vast and cultured observation, will no doubt agree.

“The bait had been swallowed: I could see that from the spark which had gleamed for an instant in my Teutonic admirer's glance. I looked upon a message of some sort from him the next day as certain. You know that at that time the box-openers, the dressers, the call-boys, wig-makers, lamp-lighters and firemen, in one word every underling in the service of the Opera, knew the addresses of the ladies of the ‘shop,’ as it was called. It formed part of their secret duties to give these addresses to those who asked for them, and most of them were able to weave upon demand a pretty biographical notice *expurgata* (don't forget that I have learnt Latin), which painted the dancer or singer enquired after in the best light.

"The next day there called upon me in the Rue Croix-des-Petits-Champs a clumsy German valet, to whom his master had tried to give the appearance of a French *chasseur*; but his Teutonic awkwardness was revealed by the fact that his foot slipped as he entered my room, with this result, that coming before his master to fall at my feet, he fell upon his behind. He rose grumbling under his breath at the perfidious art of our parquet-polishers, and handed me a letter as large as a diplomatic message, with a seal which could not have been less than three inches in diameter.

"The emissary of my ogler at the Opera told me that he was to wait for the reply which madame might be pleased to send to Monseigneur le Landgrave de Norkitten.... At this title of landgrave, which pointed to nothing less than a petty sovereign, I felt a thrill pass through my body; and at that moment the stolid face in the balcony seemed to my vanity to be embellished with all the charms of an Adonis.

"When I opened the letter, I saw that I should have to decipher four large pages of writing, crammed with tortuous germanisms, and to go through a study in hieroglyphics before I should be able to reply to the declaration of the Landgrave of Norkitten. At that time I was anything but erudite, nor had I studied the papyrus scrolls, as I have since done *in extremis*.... I had great trouble in making out the contents of this letter, in which my worthy German had carefully described the smallest of his turrets, the narrowest of his battlements, and enumerated the long litany of lordships which he held from his ancestors. Finally I reached the conclusion, which seemed to me to deserve serious consideration; for the Landgrave promised me the enjoyment of all the foregoing, if I would consent to meet his views, which he begged leave to come and explain to me on the morning of the next day.

"I sent word to the Landgrave that I would have the honour to receive him on the following day at twelve o'clock in the morning.

"M. de Norkitten was punctual, and I will describe this interview to you with some detail, my dear Monsieur Léonard, because it presents some original features such as have but rarely been offered to a moralist's observation. The Landgrave

was, as you have doubtless already understood, a German of remarkable density, who could perhaps have afforded to give the Prince d'Hénin some of his simplicity. But he was far from accepting the physical and intellectual part which Nature, very parsimoniously inclined in his case, had allotted to him. He was the real Prussian soldier of Frederick the Great's time,\* with his neck encased in a horse-hair stock, his chest thrown forward, his elbows glued to his sides, his feet set square; and in spite of all this, Norkitten, whose mind was constantly presenting arms like his body, was determined to ape the *petit-maitre* of Versailles.... An unfortunate pretension, which turned him, without his suspecting it, into the most grotesque of caricatures.

"'Mademoiselle,' said he, after paying the usual compliments, and taking a chair which I had offered him with a politeness mingled with reserve, 'you see a sad rake before you. The Lauzuns, Lauraguais, Chartres and Lauvois have achieved my demoralization; but I am tired of a life of dissipation, and I wish to put an end to it.... However I do not want to withdraw from the world like a Capuchin: I reject all reforms which look like penance.... I propose to quit the scene of my amours, but to leave behind me the memory of a brilliant action, and I can think of nothing but an abduction which would suitably meet my views.'

"You will of course understand, Monsieur Léonard," continued Julie, "that I have translated for you into French an harangue of which I had to catch the import from amidst the most incomprehensible chaos of Germanized French or Frenchified Prussian elocution.... But what I cannot possibly describe to you is the poor Landgrave's pantomime, which called up all his memories of the *Œil-de-Bœuf* or the *Comédie Française*, in order to simulate the airs of a roué of good family. I would have given ten louis to have had Barthe or Dorat hidden in my dressing-room, so that they might add to their stock of characters this unpublished type. Unfortunately I had to amuse myself privately and in secret, for beneath all this, as was in fact the case, there might lurk a destiny of the greatest interest to me. Norkitten resumed:

\* Frederick died in 1786.

"‘Mademoiselle, will you consent to be abducted?’

"‘But Monsieur . . .’ I did not finish the sentence; I thought the Landgrave would be able to interpret this reticence to mean, ‘In truth, I do not see why you need abduct me.’

"‘Forgive me for questioning you, mademoiselle; but you have perhaps observed that I take the greatest interest in you, and I would venture to ask how you are situated in matters of the heart.’

"‘I felt called upon to dissemble.

"‘Monsieur,’ I replied, ‘hidden, up to the present, in the crowd of the ballet, my heart has had no occasion to defend itself . . .’

"‘O happy day!’ cried the worthy Landgrave, rising from his chair. ‘I see you possess all that is necessary to make your abduction redound to the fame of the lucky ravisher . . . It will be a rape which will make a noise in the world . . . which will heroically crown my career.’

"‘But, Monsieur le Landgrave,’ said I, interrupting him, and inspired by a scruple of conscience, ‘I have no . . .’

"‘No fortune, you were about to say . . . For shame! do we care for that, we illustrious rakes? . . . Egad! I should get a fine reputation if I were to run away with a wealthy dancer... They would say, when I was gone, that I wanted something to put by for a rainy day, like the lowest lawyer’s clerk . . . Tell me, have you no mother, no aunt, who might raise a hue and cry in the French papers against your abduction? . . . The *Frankfort Gazette*, and the Augsburg and, finally, the Berlin papers would reprint the article, and it would look very well in the eyes of His Majesty Frederick the Great . . .’

"‘But, Monsieur, do you seriously desire to abduct me?’

"‘Certainly, mademoiselle. . . and I will take you to my Landgraviate of Norkitten.’

"‘Let us put an end to this pleasantry, Monsieur le Comte,’ said I, with that commanding dignity which always imposes upon a fool; ‘I am only a poor girl from the Opera, but I will not consent to become the plaything of a caprice which, when your whim is gratified, will leave me without resources in a foreign land.’

"‘You don’t know what you are saying, mademoiselle: the

plan I propose to you is no caprice, but on the contrary it is the result of the most careful reflection: I have reached an age when one should abjure frivolous pleasures and begin to think of living nobly.... I propose to elope with you to Prussia in order to marry you: it is the Landgravine of Norkitten whom I shall have the honour of presenting to His Majesty Frederick the Great.'

"But, Monsieur le Comte, who will guarantee....'

"The sincerity of my intentions?" interrupted the Landgrave, in tones of wounded pride. "I am a Catholic, mademoiselle; on reaching the gates of Paris, I will marry you at the feet of a priest of your own choosing.... provided it be at midnight: the hour insisted on by the laws of abduction."

"The man is mad," said I to myself; "let us make the most of his folly.... And I replied, aloud, "Monsieur, I am too much honoured by your suit to reject it.... Julie will follow you upon the conditions which you yourself have laid down."

"Come to my arms, Countess of Norkitten," cried the Landgrave, with a liveliness which led me to believe that his Teutonic phlegm did not exclude a certain warmth of temperament. "We shall set out in three days from now: I shall require that delay to prepare the way for the noise of our elopement; it will no doubt be sufficient to allow you, on your side, to arrange the preliminaries of our secret marriage."

"It would be an insult, Monsieur le Comte, not to leave that also to you. I would only wish that we might receive the nuptial benediction at the hands of M. le Curé de La Chapelle, who was once a friend of my father's."

"In this way I gave myself the appearance of confiding in him entirely, while at the same time guaranteeing myself, by my choice of a priest, against those counterfeit marriages of the novels, in which the ravisher's valet, like a sacrilegious actor, slips on the surplice and girds himself with the sacred stole.

"While preparing for my departure, I did not neglect to have discreet, but exact, enquiries made at the Prussian Legation about the Landgrave of Norkitten. All that he had told me of his condition and fortune was true; he held the rank of major-general in the Prussian army; and his family, as well as himself, filled stately pages in the records of warfare.... I

went to take leave of my friends at the Opera, telling them that I was to be abducted by main force in three days, and that I was consequently making my preparations beforehand....

"At last, after preparing at his leisure what he called the glorious rumour of my abduction, and after seeing the proofs of the articles which were to be inserted in the papers on the day after his exploit; Norkitten came to the wings, enveloped in a capacious cloak, like a Venetian *bravo*, and carried me off, dressed as a nymph of Diana, amid the suppressed laughter of all my companions, of whom I had been taking leave during the last two days.... I found no explanation for the Count's folly: his desire to be regarded as an audacious libertine was not sufficient to account for the strangeness of this step.... But I realized all too soon the kind of vanity which Norkitten attached to this rape carried out with so much pomp and circumstance.

"The good curé married us at midnight: the venerable pastor cried with joy on seeing me escape from the clutches of Satan, to whom, as a dancer, I must needs belong, in order to live honourably under the laws of Hymen. My dream was a beautiful one till then; and when I stepped back into the carriage with my husband, as Landgravine of Norkitten, I threw myself into his arms with all the grateful expansiveness of a woman of twenty who has not seen her lover for three days.... Alas! the moment of awakening was at hand.

"How shall I tell you, Monsieur Léonard?" continued Julie, playing with the strings of her green taffeta apron, so that she might have the occasion to cast down her eyes. "Never was deception more complete.... 'Ah! Monsieur le Comte,' I exclaimed after an hour, overcome by the descendant of the most discouraging of truths, 'you must have been a sad rake indeed!'"

At this moment a servant came to tell us that dinner was ready, and the fair flower-maker put off to the next day the remainder of her adventures.



## CHAPTER IX

William the jeweller—His arrogant honesty—An English peculiarity—The treasures of the *Arabian Nights*—Black diamonds—Gastronomic graces—English music—The romance of a night.

MADAME T. kept her promise, and her son accompanied me, on the second day after my arrival in London, to the shop of William the jeweller, which was in the long street known as the Strand. Through the intermediary of my young interpreter, I frankly told the jeweller of the commission with which I had been charged by the Queen of France, and I displayed to his eyes the diamonds which Her Majesty had entrusted to me.

"Oho!" said William, "those stones have been set in Germany, and not recently either.... Here is one which I recognize as having belonged to the Empress Maria Theresa."

"Yes, it was from her," I replied, "that her august daughter received them."

"I presume, sir," continued the English merchant, "that before bringing these diamonds you had them valued in Paris, and that you informed the Queen approximately of the price which you expected to obtain for them."

"I did, sir, take that precaution: not that I thought that a purchaser of your nation would not give me a fair price, but in order that Her Majesty might know pretty nearly the value of the jewels she was placing in my hands."

"And do you think," asked the jeweller, weighing the stones one after the other in his hands, "that you have received a fairly correct estimate of their value?"

"The jeweller to whom I went is looked upon as one of the first experts in his trade."

"Well, then, at how much did he value them together?" asked William, who had by this time submitted all the jewels to a rapid but attentive examination.

"My countryman thinks that these diamonds are worth to the trade purchaser 350,000 livres," I replied, determined as far as possible to protect the Queen's interests in the bargain which I was conducting.

"Your countryman," replied the Englishman, "has either a very light hand or a very light conscience.... It is easy to see that all these brilliants, which have been set with the want of experience common to the workmen of the last century, are half hidden in their settings. I need not take them out and weigh them to be able to tell you that they are worth 100,000 francs above the valuation of the Paris jeweller; and I will at once prove to you that I am able to form an idea of what they weigh without the setting. See, here is a single stone which I value at 9,000 livres of your money, without its setting; I will have it taken out, and we will then weigh it, and by comparing it with the tariff, you will see that I am not two louis out."

The experiment was made; and the brilliant, clear of its setting, and weighed with the greatest care, proved to be worth, at the current rate, 8,974 livres and 10 sous....

"You see," continued the English jeweller, laughing, "that my estimate is pretty correct. And so I offer you 450,000 livres, payable at sight on any place in Europe you may be pleased to mention.... This is only a trifling transaction, and it is no use to waste time in examining the jewels. Does my proposal suit you?"

"The more so, sir," I replied, shaking the merchant by the hand, "since it is the proposal of a man of honour and of conscience...."

"Say rather of an Englishman, sir."

I did not think it necessary to deprive the British nation of the merit of this integrity in favour of the personal honesty of William; but I thought to myself that in generalizing in this way, the jeweller was giving way to an outburst of somewhat fanatical patriotism.

"And so it is a bargain?" asked William.

"Certainly," I hastened to reply, "and I will ask you, sir, to pay over the amount to the correspondent of M. Vandenyver, the banker of the French Court."

"Since you wish to receive the money in London, you must dine with me; I will serve up your 450,000 livres in bank-notes at dessert.... Good-day.... till two o'clock."

We had seen the jeweller in his shop; at two o'clock, we found the ex-Lord Mayor in a sumptuous living-room: for William had been Lord Mayor in 1788, at a time when he inhabited the City. In the morning we had to do with a business-like and brusque-mannered merchant; in the afternoon we were received by a sort of *grand seigneur*, with easy and polished manners, who welcomed us in the midst of an extremely distinguished family, consisting of a lady in middle age, but still comely, two young girls, of whom the elder seemed to be about eighteen, and a young man, the brother of the two misses: he was addressed as the baronet.\*

All of these spoke French perfectly, and what I was far from expecting, William himself expressed himself in our language with astonishing facility, and almost without any accent, which is very rare among the English. I gaily taxed him with the innocent perfidy which he displayed that morning, when waiting for my words to be translated to him.

"There was no perfidy in that," replied William, with a serious air. "Here I am the man in society, the host who is bound to sympathize as far as in him lies with the guests who honour his house with their presence. But in my shop it is different: I owe it to my customers to show myself under my national aspect, and I should dread, in employing a foreign language, to weaken by my uncertainty of expression the character for frankness which I consider to distinguish the English merchant. That was my motive, sir; and I am inclined to believe that you will agree with me."

I replied that that was so, and I spoke the truth.

"At my table, gentlemen," continued the jeweller, "I will be as French as you please: perhaps it would be more becoming to say as I can; but you will forgive me any little presumption in this respect when I tell you that I spent all my boyhood in the Paris work-rooms, and I do not hesitate to add that that is the reason why I have attained my present position.... The English jewellers lack the first two qualifications of our trade:

\* *Sic* in the original; or rather, *le baronnet*.

imagination and taste.... You see that if my nationality knows how to do justice to my countrymen, it is also ready to give their due to yours. But I wish," continued William, impatiently," "that my French cook would imitate my compliance and be a little more willing to adopt our English habits of punctuality; he is keeping us waiting dinner to-day in a most hopeless fashion .... In order to pass the time, gentlemen, let me show you my private collection, in which you will see some objects of a certain value."

Leading us across his rooms, of which the furniture must have cost at least half a million, the English merchant took us to his study, whose walls were lined with well-stocked book-shelves. Behind one of the glass doors of these shelves, which William opened, and where we expected to see nothing but richly bound books, we found a small bronze door, upon which the graver's art had represented, with exquisite delicacy of workmanship, the principal attributes of commerce. This formidable barrier yielded to the application of a tiny steel key, which our host wore at his watch-chain.... We entered a very simply furnished room, lighted by a solitary window, which was protected by a double set of bars.

"This closet," said William, "contains all my wealth, with the exception of a few hundred thousand pounds sterling...."

"I should think myself very lucky," said I, laughing, "if I was the owner of only one half of the exception."

"Riches do not constitute the only happiness," murmured the jeweller, and I thought I heard a sigh accompany this reflection. And he continued, "When one does business, one's first care must be to be well supplied with stock. I have collected here all that can be wanted to make my trade go smoothly. On this side are the everyday necessities of our business," and he pointed to a pile of silver ingots on the ground, of about four cubic feet. Overhead, on stages, lay three or four hundred thousand pounds' worth of gold. "This is the market of my fellow-merchants," continued the jeweller, "and I try to let them be always well supplied in every branch of business."

We turned towards some forty drawers, placed one above the other.

"Here," said William, "I have a very complete collection, as

I believe, of all known precious stones. I have for it the love of a collector for his hobby.... See," added the Englishman, opening one of the drawers, "here are three black diamonds. They are not the only ones in Europe, but I dare swear there is none known so large.... The Empress of Russia has long been bargaining for them; but they would cost her about twenty thousand serfs, and Her Majesty very rightly thinks that she could adorn her crown more cheaply with benefits conferred upon her people."

During the whole extent of a career devoted to the toilette of ladies of rank, I had never seen a black diamond. I examined William's with mingled admiration and curiosity, and I was struck with the fire that escaped from them.

The Strand tradesman opened all the drawers of his priceless treasure.... Never had I beheld so many brilliants, rubies, emeralds, sapphires, beryls, topazes and assorted pearls.... It was as though a fairy's wand had opened up all these riches before my eyes.... I no longer felt surprise at William's description of his purchase of the Queen's diamonds as a trifling transaction.

A bell rang in a corner of the strong-room, and interrupted our inspection.

"That," said our host, gaily, "is the call to a more precious collection, at this moment, than all these pretty gauds.... Put all of these before a horde of savages at a few paces from the dinner to which the bell summons us, and you would soon see, by means of the only true logic, that of necessity, which is the more real of the two."

Our amphitryon was a philosopher, such as is not met with every day in the guild of jewellers.

The dinner was sumptuous, sought-out, and long; the English love the pleasures of the table, and it must be agreed that they employ their time well. The ladies themselves, however refined, are not considered to fall short of good manners if they eat with an appetite and even drink their wine without water. William's daughters were charming creatures, with slender figures, recalling the ethereal virgins of Wodan's paradise.... and upon my word they could have defied a Musketeer in swallowing a bumper of Lafite or Tokay.

The elder of the two, whose name was Clarissa, had done honour to the dinner as freely as her younger sister, without losing a certain expression of melancholy which was imprinted upon her features.... This young girl was divinely beautiful; but a practised eye could observe a drawn appearance about her face which only occurs, in England as well as in France, as the result of some imperious passion, and this passion is generally that of love....

"I can guess what you are thinking, Monsieur Léonard," whispered young T., who was sitting on my right. "Remind me to tell you about Miss Clarissa when we go from here."

Except when one is eating, an English evening passes very sadly. The famous "routs," of which we have heard so much in recent years, are not to be excepted from this severe but accurate condemnation: one elbows each other, one treads on each other's feet; the atmosphere is saturated with a *pot-pourri* of perfumes; one yawns at these gatherings without measure and almost without restraint. The two hours we spent in William's drawing-room after dinner seemed slow to me, notwithstanding that his younger daughter had exerted herself to play the piano in a distinguished fashion, and that her brother the baronet\* had sung, one after the other, three Italian ballads. England is not the classical home of the fine arts, and its indigenous music is deplorably mediocre.... We all know that some time ago it was necessary to call in our fellow-countryman Gossec † to compose their famous *God Save the King*.

Miss William's playing lacked neither precision nor delicacy of touch; but the execution was entirely devoid of soul, that vehicle of melody. As to the baronet, the Italian music, that so sweet, so harmonious utterance, sustained striking injuries from his Brittanic accent.... There is no such grotesque parody as Italian in the mouth of an Englishman.

The jeweller had taken advantage of a pause between a

\* Léonard continues to use this style, and it has been thought best to retain it in the translation.

† François Joseph Gossec, 1733—1829, the son of a ploughman. He is the composer of a number of oratorios and operas, and of a very highly esteemed Requiem Mass. In 1795 he was appointed the first *inspecteur* of the newly established Paris Conservatoire. During the Revolution he composed the greater part of the music for the Patriotic festivals, but this is probably the first and last occasion upon which he has been accused of composing the British National Anthem.



fantasia on the piano and an Italian song to count out to me the price of the Queen's diamonds, and we took our leave of the merchant and his family at nine o'clock.

"As a rule," said M. T., who accompanied me to the Golden Cannon, where I was still staying, "the English girls are virtuous; but when their inclination does not prompt them to remain so, they take but little pains to struggle against the leanings which tend to bring about their fall: in this region the sex knows no mean between principle and passion.... If you assail an Englishwoman's virtue, especially before she has known the bonds of Hymen, either you will arouse her indignation to the highest degree, or she will tell you without a moment's hesitation, 'I am yours'.... It was in these terms that Miss Clarissa replied last year to a young Guardsman whom the baronet had brought with him to William's country-house in Kent.

The officer was handsome, admirably built, of amiable disposition, and an excellent musician. He attracted Miss Clarissa and knew it. Whether the young soldier's love responded to hers I never discovered; but where is the man who, seeing himself loved by a charming woman, will not find a reciprocating flame in his head, if not in his heart?.... One fine morning, William learnt that his daughter had eloped with his son's friend. The baronet, furious at the sight of the despair of his father and mother, of whom the latter was a woman with the virtue of a tigress, mounted one of his hunters, and rode off in pursuit of the fugitives. Lovers in their situation do not travel very far, at least along the high-road, during the first night of their journey. The pursuer caught up the amorous couple in a lonely inn, forty miles from the starting-point.

The baronet forced his unworthy friend to give him satisfaction at the sword's point for the dishonour of the sister whom he loved. When this sort of combat succeeds another kind, it leaves but a small chance of victory to the combatant: the Guardsman was wounded, and Sir William carried off his sister. But the injury done to the rich merchant's family was not one of those which can be entirely wiped away in blood, and Clarissa's father demanded a more complete satisfaction. He was repulsed by the parents of the seducer, who belonged to the illustrious

race of the Somersets, and who refused an alliance with the family of a merchant, ex-Lord Mayor though he was.... Things should have been allowed to remain there, so as at least to prevent scandal from adding its melancholy lustre to the girl's dishonour. But William conceived the unhappy thought of going to law.... Probably he thought himself rich enough to purchase justice for his daughter; it would have been better to remember that the Somersets were sufficiently powerful to intimidate the judges.... He lost his case: the pleadings established with scarcely a doubt that Miss William had given her full consent; it wanted little to prove that it was she who had seduced her lover. The case could not have turned out worse for the poor girl's reputation; but her father's immense fortune is a sovereign balm for the severest wounds of chastity, and some day a philosophical aspirant will present himself, ready to cast the veil of sturdy resignation over the romance of a night of which the fair young English-woman has been the heroine. No female millionaire has ever yet been known to remain single."

I hastened to pay over the proceeds of the sale of the Queen's diamonds to the correspondent of M. Vandenyver, recommending him to transmit the amount to Paris with the least possible delay. William had promised me to keep secret this transaction, which, innocent though it was, would certainly have been turned to account by the enemies of Marie Antoinette, who would have scented some guilty destination for the 450,000 francs which Her Majesty's private jewels had produced. I was far from foreseeing that this negociation would cause me so much annoyance a few months later, as all Europe has since known: I will speak of that when the time comes.

The affair of the diamonds was not the only one which the Queen had deigned to entrust to me. I was charged with a number of errands for Her Majesty both in England and on the banks of the Rhine, whither I was instructed to repair after completing my most pressing business in London. One of my first commissions was to get word of the famous Comtesse de La Motte. I have already stated that Marie Antoinette had nothing to fear from this intriguing woman in any other case than that in which Her Majesty now found herself.... but for

the past three years the Throne of France had been a sort of culprit's stool, and the calumnies spread broadcast concerning the King and Queen were accepted by that terrible judge, the public, as so many indictments of whose truth it was convinced .... Louis XVI.'s Consort was but too well advised, alas ! that in times of revolution it is better to purchase silence than to treat a lie with contempt. I presumed that Madame T. would be able to procure me the address of the tainted descendant of the Valois and I hastened to go to and ask for it.... although I must confess that my eagerness was considerably stimulated by my longing to hear the continuation of Julie's story.

## CHAPTER X

*Julie's story (continued).*

I HAD chosen my time well for my visit to Madame T.'s work-room. Julie, the Landgravine-forewoman, had just finished her day's task, and was expecting me. She motioned me to the chair on which I had sat when she commenced to tell me her story, and leaning with her arms on the green morocco chair which was the attribute of her industrial suzerainty, she continued her narrative as follows:

"It was between Claye and Meaux that I acquired the melancholy certainly that to all the wealth of my husband there must be added a deficiency which in my eyes made him the poorest of men. The Landgrave threw himself at my feet, poured out the humblest excuses, and inflicted upon me, through the rumbling of the carriage-wheels, the following strange discourse:

"'I have deceived you, Julie. I yielded to the absurdest of vanities, and endeavoured with lying appearances to conceal the deplorable impotence with which capricious Nature has afflicted me. In France, an infirmity is looked upon as ridiculous. I dreaded to become a prey to the sarcasm of your countrymen, and as I wished fully to enjoy that Paris which is so rightly called the Paradise of pleasure, I took it into my head to practise the most extraordinary charlatanism. Alas! I found myself reduced to contemplate the charms of a sex of which my brain was enamoured, without being permitted to render it any other homage save that of admiration; and nevertheless I had the pretension to play the part of a Lothario. I thought that, as a good Prussian, I was in honour bound not to let my reputation suffer, even in this respect, in comparison with the French, and I longed at all cost to enrol my name

on the list of the charming rakes who are run after by the Court and the town. The servants in my employment, the friends whom my wealth had not failed to attract, the journalists whom it is so easy to purchase, all spread abroad the fame of my adventures; and I alone was in the secret of the shame that I had undergone in those adventures which I had carried to an issue, and of the mocking laughter of the women whose favours I had so dearly bought or whose tender affection I had so cruelly deceived.

"By the ill luck common to all upon whom Heaven has imposed this disgrace, I love, with all the might of my soul and imagination, the sex of whose derision I am the object at the very moment when all amorous effort is realized in the supreme melting-pot of voluptuousness; and by a still greater fatality, I love it especially under those conditions in which I can only excite its pitying contempt or its angry resentment.

"Such, my poor Julie, was the motive that turned me to you. My secret could not long be kept in the midst of the world when my untoward desires prompted me each day to divulge it. I longed for a companion for whom it would be, at most, a family secret. And so I am guilty towards you, dear wife; but my crime is not without its compensations. I make you a Countess, almost a Sovereign. I give you a large fortune. For your precarious existence I substitute a life without care, without disquietude, and I hope without unhappiness. Can you pardon me, therefore, for deceiving you on this one point, in order to fulfil your wishes in every other respect?"

"During this long speech of the Landgrave's, I had been able to examine my position from every point of view, and this mental examination soon revealed to me the resource which lies within the grasp of every woman deceived as I had been, and in whatever country.... But you can imagine, Léonard, that I took care not to let my sham spouse perceive my design to supply myself with the only compensation which he had not mentioned to me. On the contrary, I swathed myself in a noble and becoming resignation. I told Norkitten that my gratitude for his kindnesses would rise above all the coarse pricks of the senses; that theatre-woman though I was, my sentiments would

not do discredit to the rank to which he had condescended to raise me, and that my duty would always be to me a supreme law.

"Our journey proceeded under the appearance of the most tender intimacy. Truly, one would have said that I regarded as the most insignificant accessory, as a wholly unimportant superfluity, all that was lacking in the Count's affection to constitute conjugal happiness in the opinion of a woman of twenty. And so we arrived in Berlin.

"My husband insisted that I should be presented to the King. Personally I cared but little for this signal distinction. Frederick II. was then King of Prussia, and I knew that with ladies Frederick the Great was not always Frederick the Polite. However, I prepared to undergo this presentation. The philosopher of Sans-Souci was at Potsdam, where His Majesty was building a palace. We went to this residence in gala dress. We were spared the formalities of the introduction, and I was glad of it. One of the chamberlains, a friend of the Landgrave's, came to tell us that the victor of Rosbach was engaged with his bricklayers, and conducted us to His Majesty.

"We had some difficulty in distinguishing the Prussian Cæsar from among the workmen who surrounded him, his clothes and even his face being covered with mortar. Frederick was for the moment practising greatness after the fashion of the Czar Peter I., whom he had seen as a child. When the King beheld a lady in full dress, with her train sweeping the paths of his gardens, he stepped out from the group of masons, holding a rule in his hand, and came towards us.

"'Ah ! is that you, general ?' said he to the Landgrave, after bowing to me and touching his hat, which he soiled with mortar in doing so. 'Back already from the fair land of France ? Were the frédérics d'or so soon exhausted ?'

"'No, Sire, but I thought it my duty not to remain away longer from Your Majesty's service.'

"'That is very well said, general ; but in any case I see that if the pleasures of Paris have made inroads upon your moneyed treasure, you have brought back with you another of a more precious kind. . . .'

"'Your flattering compliment makes me unspeakably fortunate, Sire, in being able to present to you the Countess of Norkitten. . . .'



"Your marriage, I presume, was the result of one of those sympathetic lightning-flashes with which our phlegmatic Germans are but ill acquainted. We did not hear of your intention of forming this match.... But one can readily imagine that to have been the case, Monsieur le Comte, when one looks at Madame: long formalities are incompatible with the hope of such a charming possession."

"Sire," I replied, with my most gracious smile, "if M. le Comte neglected to obtain Your Majesty's leave before marrying, it was because he was anxious to let me admire the greatest Sovereign of the world."

"A real French answer, fair lady; but I too know how to make madrigals in your language, and I should say that it was much more probable that Norkitten feared lest you should escape him. However, we are all the gainers by his eagerness," continued Frederick the Great, with exquisite courtesy, "and I sincerely hope that my Court may have its share of so charming an acquisition."

The Landgrave and I bowed. Some general officers came upon the scene, and put an end to the Royal audience, and we took leave of His Majesty. I withdrew enchanted with this King, who had been described to me as a soldier of free speech, vulgar, and always willing to insult my sex, which possessed for him, it was said, not the slightest attraction. I never knew any one able to verify this fact. Frederick, when taking my hand, squeezed it with his own, and yet it is improbable that I resembled any of his Court pages.

The Hero of the North was at that time sixty-one years of age, and nothing about his person harmonized with his heroic reputation. No imposing feature revealed the greatness of Frederick II.: his physiognomy was satirical rather than noble; his eyes, shaded with thick eyebrows, shot out sparks of wit, but no single flash of genius: one might have thought that, like Nicomedes of old, the King was destined to triumph over his enemies rather by his incisive irony than by his military initiative.... Frederick the Great exaggerated military ways to such an extent that one might think he had need of this affectation in order to keep up the enthusiasm of his admirers. They grew accustomed to seeing him from early

morning with his neck confined within a brass or horse-hair collar, which traced a threefold wrinkle on his hanging jowls. His back was rounded into a semicircle; his waist was tightly compressed by a black silk sash; his short, lean thighs concealed their puny forms in a pair of ample blue cloth breeches; and his little legs, which had strode so far across the field of glory, were lost within the folds of a huge pair of jack-boots. All this, combined with the historic pigtail of which so much has been talked, constituted, in the eyes of the vulgar, the great captain, the great sovereign. And by the vulgar I mean almost the totality of mankind. You could find but few who would be disposed to applaud the great actors of this stage of ours if they showed themselves in deshabille.

"Before setting out for our Landgraviate of Norkitten, the Count took me over the theatrical town which Frederick II. was adorning with magnificent façades, hiding the mean brick and mortar behind. As I looked at the back of this vain architectural display, it seemed to me as though I was lifting up the embroidered skirt of a Parisian grisette and catching sight of the equivocal shift beneath. And yet this Berlin of the Opera stage was the finest attempt at decoration which Frederick the Great was able to offer to the travellers in his country....

"After a fortnight's journey, which proved for me but a very pale honey-moon, we came within sight of the picturesque rather than smiling banks of the Pregel. The count pointed out to me, jutting out from a fine park, the Castle of Norkitten, surrounded by the houses of the fair-sized town of the same name. The country side seemed to me to be pretty animated, and I congratulated myself at not having to spend my life in one of those ruined, feudal edifices which I had occasionally seen planted here and there in the midst of the gloomy forests of pine-trees which we had passed through on our way.

"Albeit my husband was Landgrave only in name, since Frederick II. has, as it were, extinguished all the pretty sovereignties which might have interfered with his own, the inhabitants of Norkitten nevertheless beheld in their lord the descendant of the old sovereigns of the County, and treated him, except with respect to their taxes, much as they had treated his predecessors. We were received with a salute from the twelve little



guns which lay modestly hidden behind the ramparts of the Castle ever since their detonation was no longer a due official homage paid to any but the King; but our vanity enjoyed this tribute without any dread, since there was little likelihood of Frederick II.'s hearing at Berlin the honour fraudulently rendered to the Landgrave of Norkitten."

When Julie's story had reached thus far, a large order for flowers, newly arrived, constrained her to postpone its continuation. On the morning of the next day, I was to have an interview with the notorious Comtesse de La Motte, whom I had begged to wait in for me. I had therefore to put off till the afternoon the conclusion of a narrative which, I confess, played upon my curiosity as much by the strangeness of the events it contained, as by the philosophic ease with which it was told by my Landgravine-flowerwoman.



## CHAPTER XI

The Comtesse de La Motte in her London home—Julie's Story (*concluded*).

THE Comtesse de La Motte resided, in January 1792, in Swallow Street, London. She occupied a more than modest third-floor apartment, consisting of two rooms, which she did not keep over clean, despite the numerous visitors whom curiosity drew to visit this pitiful celebrity.

Jeanne de Saint-Rémy de Valois had dressed herself, to receive me, with all the coquettishness which her position allowed her to indulge in. Finding her thus adorned, and seeing on her lips a smile which even at this date gave her a look of prettiness, I concluded that she had determined to sell me either a disavowal of the insults contained in the Memoirs which she had recently had composed for her by a French writer, a former actor, whom she paid for his work with her mercenary favours, or else a categorical declaration exculpating the Queen in the matter of the diamond necklace.

A capitulation upon these terms would certainly have suited the avaricious views of Madame de La Motte. But will it be believed that, although reduced to the most absolute state of necessity, although lacking food when prostitution did not provide her with it, this woman found within her cancered soul the diabolical strength to refuse to publish the truth which lay hidden in her breast? Whenever she received notice of the approaching visit of an emissary from the Queen, she resolved to sell her disavowals, more or less garbled, it is true, more or less perfidious, and interlarded with a series of reticences which the malevolent might consider yet more convincing than her lying accusations.... But no sooner did she find herself face to face with the agents of the French Court, than the thunder of the hatred which she bore Marie Antoinette drowned the

most urgent promptings of her needs. Grinding her teeth she exclaimed, "Suffer, wretched woman, shiver by your empty hearth, starve before your empty side-board, and live upon your bitter resentment until it devours your very breasts."

At the commencement of my interview with Jeanne de Valois, I saw her thus wavering between the most terrible extremities.... For a moment I hoped to incline the scale of truth by heaping it up with gold.... I forcibly bent Madame de La Motte's fingers so as to make them close upon two rolls of a hundred louis, and I saw her turn red and pale in succession; her knees trembled beneath her; her heart beat so that you might have heard it on the stairs; and certain of my triumph, I said :

"My dear countess, one word, and all this gold is yours."

"One word, that is very little," she replied, scrutinizing my features with a fixed look.

"It is all I ask. Declare that the word '*Approuve*' and the signature '*Marie-Antoinette de France*' written upon the conditions of sale and payment of the necklace are not in the Queen's hand...."

"You ask nothing more than that!" cried the countess, showing her two rows of small, white teeth, clenched together. "Ah! credulous Léonard, if those few words had been forged, would the stupid big-wigs of your Parliament have written in their hideous verdict, 'The said words shall be erased and expunged?' The proof of a forgery is never destroyed. It is preserved for all time, especially when the honour of a Queen of France is compromised by it. It is preserved so that future generations may know that it was indeed a forgery, and that the Queen was falsely accused. If I were to declare that the word '*Approuve*' and the signature were not in her hand, the maladroitness of your parliament would give me the lie."

"A judicial error cannot hold against a statement of truth."

"But you don't know what you ask of me, monsieur!" cried Madame de La Motte, with a sort of roar. "I hear it every moment, through the hubbub of the day, through the silence of the night, waking, sleeping, I hear the funeral knell issuing from the butcher's throat: 'I condemn Jeanne de Valois de Saint-Rémy de Luz to be taken with a rope around her neck.'

and to be beaten and fustigated on her naked body with rods, and to be burnt with a hot iron upon both shoulders in the shape of a letter V, and the sentence shall be carried out by the executioner of the High Court.' And do you think they spared me this horrible sentence?" continued the countess, in furious accents. "See, judge for yourself, satellite of the Court; see whether the gold you offer me can make me forget the scars with which my poor body is covered.... Bah! for me the words shame and chastity are but empty sounds.... did not all that Paris crowd see my blood trickling down my bare limbs? See, behold the traces left by what you call justice...."

And Madame de La Motte, tearing off her kerchief, and snatching aside the bodice of her gown, showed me a long wound marking where the red-hot iron had passed over her breast while she was struggling beneath the executioners' hands.... And then, uncovering her thighs with still less reserve, she showed me the purple marks of the rods upon her skin white as satin.

"And you expect me," cried she, "to forget such outrages as these; you expect my voice and my pen to absolve her who could not find one pitying word to stay the hands of the executioners from touching the body of a descendant of the Kings!.... Never! Never!..."

After giving way to this paroxysm of frenzied anger, the unhappy woman lay back in her arm-chair, exhausted and deprived of movement, without closing the garments that she had torn asunder before my eyes.

While I assisted her to recover herself, one of the rolls of louis which I held in my hand fell down and burst, and the coins rolled all over the room.... I had not the courage to pick them up; and soon after, I went away, determined to leave this gold for the wretched woman's use. In an hour's time Jeanne de Valois walked into my room, panting, with haggard looks, and under the influence of a powerful emotion.

"Monsieur," exclaimed the countess, "what is the meaning of this gold which lay strewn over my floor, and which I now bring back to you? What have I said? What have I done? How did I earn this money?"

"By your misfortunes alone, madame...."

"Oh no, you are deceiving me," she resumed. "I must have

spoken, I contradicted myself, I have become the most contemptible of creatures.... But I withdraw all that I may have said in contradiction to that inexorable resentment which, is now my only virtue."

"Egad, madame, you said nothing, nothing at all...."

"Take back that money, Monsieur Léonard.... I will not have it.... Ah!" she added, drawing herself up to her full height, "infamy has not exhausted all the Royal blood I once had in my veins.... I will only keep one of these pieces to buy bread with.... vice sometimes fails to provide me with it...."

With these words, Jeanne de Valois placed the money upon the table, with the exception of one louis, and left the room with precipitate steps. Such a woman as this was bound to end as she did: no one was surprised to read one day in the English newspaper, the *Times*, that in an attack of madness she had hurled herself from her window and killed herself on the spot.

My Landgravine of the flower-factory was awaiting me at the appointed time to tell me the end of her story. I remarked to her, with some malice, that she always sent away the cutter when she was about to relate her narrative.

"You shall soon see why," she replied, "and you shall see that it is because of the interest which I take in him: there are certain events in one's life which are always present to the mind, and which one need not go out of one's way to recall."

"This means, I presume, that M. Stanislas has played his part in the adventures of Madame la Landgravine de Norkitten."

"That goes without saying.... But listen."

And Julie, who had still two or three bouquets to finish, resumed her recital, while continuing to turn in her fingers the artificial flowers, which she mounted upon green paper, in order to simulate the natural colour of their stalks:

"The Castle of Norkitten, whose courtyard we entered amid the roar of artillery, was built by those old German knights who were formerly so powerful in the North of Germany. It is a most imposing historic monument, and gives a great idea of the might of its former owners. Nevertheless the sight of its gloomy walls, its Gothic arches and its turrets with their narrow loopholes, produced in my mind an indefinable sadness, and spread

a sombre veil over the opulent and glorious future which my imagination had until then portrayed.... Vain were these hopes of compensation which I had hoped, as an ex-dancer, to procure myself.... The Castle seemed to me to be a prison in which my youth was to be spent deprived of all the pleasures which form its only charm.... I heaved sigh upon sigh....

"The carriage drew up at the foot of a great flight of steps, down which came to greet us a venerable housekeeper, followed by an ecclesiastic who seemed to be seventy or seventy-five years old.... Three or four servants and the same number of gamekeepers soon came after to receive their master and to carry our luggage indoors.... I saw before me all the Household of the honorary Landgrave of Norkitten, and not one of the retainers that met my eyes was less than half a century in years.... And as the clergyman gave me his hand to ascend a wide, cold, stone stairway, I said to myself that I had undoubtedly made a fool's bargain.

"Alas ! my sad forebodings were all too soon to be realized. My husband was madly in love with me.... In love ! forgive me, God ! for using such an expression in speaking of such a man.... and displayed such intense jealousy that for nearly three years the septuagenarian priest who fulfilled the office of chaplain was the only man allowed access to me in the Count's absence.

"Norkitten did not receive a soul, and replied to none of the invitations that reached him every day from the neighbouring landlords. Time after time, from 1773 to 1777, Frederick II. obligingly invited the Landgrave to bring me to his Court; but in my husband's replies he always pleaded a legion of rheumatic pains, or sciatical aches, or gouty attacks which kept him at the banks of the Pregel.

"In other respects I was allowed to want for nothing. The most elegant equipages, the newest and most dainty fashions, the most costly jewels were lavished upon me, without my even taking the trouble to ask for them. The Landgrave, though himself but little inclined for the pleasures of the table, caused ours to be covered for my benefit with the most delicate viands, the most exquisite wines.... For a moment, I thought of drinking to excess, hoping to deceive through one form of

intoxication the barren transports of another. But my experiment proved a disastrous one, and I speedily learnt that these two forms of intoxication go hand in hand, and that while trying to overcome that which did not hold out the goblet to me, I only succeeded in exalting it.

"I next abandoned myself to a succession of whimsical tastes, hoping that the Count would weary of his endless yielding to my fancies, and leave me free to follow my own inclinations. Vain hope! I became devoted to music: it turned out that my husband was an excellent musician. I desired to learn to paint: he appointed himself my instructor. The art of riding came next: Norkitten was considered one of the best horsemen in the Kingdom. Then came the turn of hunting: none more expert than the Landgrave with hounds or with gun.

"'You must agree, Monsieur le Comte,' said I one day to the too universally gifted Landgrave, and I gave a bitter smile, 'you must agree that Nature, when endowing you with an almost general aptitude, would have done better to complete her handiwork.'

"That is true, my dear Julie. But as luck would not have it so, I must strive to make the most of those faculties which I possess, that you may have the less leisure to think of those in which I am deficient.'

"The strain of irony which I scented in this reply excited my vexation. Said I to myself, 'The Landgrave plumes himself upon the state of slavery to which he has reduced me; his jealousy gives a sort of defiance to my cunning; I must triumph in this struggle, were it only for the honour of my sex.... Honour is perhaps not exactly the word; no matter, my mind is made up.'

"Destiny also had made up its mind, which unfortunately did not agree with mine. Four long years passed, during which I endured the saddest slavery which it is possible for a woman to undergo. I was wearied of everything, because in everything that I took up I felt the weight of the conjugal chain which was crushing me. It was at this pitch of satiety that I thought of learning Latin. I knew that the Count had never studied, and I hoped to escape by this means from his eternal obsession.

"'I want to learn Latin,' said I, one morning, to my husband.

"‘An excellent idea,’ replied the Landgrave, who had long since made up his mind to express astonishment at none of my caprices. ‘My chaplain shall teach you.... I am quite ready to abandon my Héloïse to that Saint-Preux....’

“‘How generous, Monsieur le Comte !’

“‘I shall always be generous, Countess, when prudence does not forbid me.’

“This reply angered me to such a degree that if it had been eleven at night and the septuagenarian chaplain had been in my room, I would have said to him, ‘Monsieur, do me the kindness to sleep with me, so that the Count may find you in my bed in the morning.’

“Nevertheless, after my first momentary annoyance, I thought of the good priest only as my professor. He taught me to conjugate *amo*, but with him that verb in all its moods and tenses was entirely without consequence.

“I experienced a certain pleasure in mastering the difficulties of my studies. How my former companions at the Opera would have laughed could they have seen me busied with Livy, Tacitus and Juvenal ! But it was the poets especially that gave me real delight, when I had come to understand their language, so rich in figures and in imitative harmony.... The passion which filled their verses suffused with delight that which had so long lain inactive in my heart.... Virgil filled my dreams with his *Aeneas* and his *Turnus*; Ovid and Tibullus brought back to me the fond idiom of love; and sometimes in my dreams I would substitute myself for the Julia of the former or the Delia of the latter. Once I mischievously told my husband of this, and I saw that he became almost jealous of the Roman knights of the Augustan age.

“It was not until after my fourth year of married life that an event occurred which was to change my bed of thorns into one of roses.

“My maid was the only person of youthful years in the castle, besides myself. The girl loved me and pitied my troubles, which she easily understood, for the Prussian women are very impressionable.

“‘Madame la Comtesse,’ she said to me one day, ‘I am going to leave you....’

"‘What do I hear, Bertha? Are you going to abandon me, you, who seemed so devoted to me?’

“It is my love for you, Madame, that makes me leave you,” replied my maid, lowering her voice.

“I do not understand.”

“I cannot and must not explain myself further at present. I know you are unhappy, and I am willing to help to soften your lot, but I dare not tell you all, lest you yourself should prove an obstacle to your own happiness.”

“My dear Bertha, you are becoming more and more mysterious.”

“I hope, Madame la Comtesse,” replied Bertha, laughing, “that the facts will be more easily understood, when they take place. But by telling you of them, I should risk preventing them. I am going straight to M. le Comte to tell him that I am leaving the service of Madame la Comtesse in order to.... to get married.”

“And not a word of your plans, my good Bertha?”

“Not a word; but soon I hope you will witness some very satisfactory effects.... By the way, I would urgently beg Madame la Comtesse to receive a new lady’s maid upon my recommendation.... that is quite essential.”

“I ask no better; but the Count....”

“There is no reason why he should refuse. He knows that I have served you faithfully, Madame, and so long as the usual formalities are gone through....”

“Ah yes, the secret inspection by the old housekeeper, so as to make certain that no lover is brought into the castle in the disguise of a lady’s maid.”

“A very salutary precaution,” said the waiting-maid, with an arch smile.

“My efforts were of no avail to assist me in obtaining a word more from Bertha on the happiness which she promised to procure for me by leaving me. So far was I from suspecting its nature, that I began to think it a mere expedient which the girl had contrived in order to escape from the tediousness of a condition but little suited to the ordinary leanings of youth, which are none too scrupulous in the case of the serving-maids of Prussia.

"M. de Norkitten gave a ready ear to Bertha's supposed marriage, and I thought it quite natural that she should leave me from so legitimate a motive. As she had always conducted herself very properly at the Castle, the Count willingly accepted her recommendation of a new lady's maid. He insisted, however, upon the secret examination entrusted to the old matron, the official duenna of the Lord of Norkitten.

Bertha took leave of me with a knowing little air, with a roguish wink which for the moment gave me no clue whatever to her intentions. She went away. In the evening the Landgrave brought me a tall, handsome girl, who spoke French with an ease that agreeably surprised me. I learnt, moreover, that she possessed many amiable accomplishments, and I experienced some satisfaction in perceiving that this young girl would at least be able to add to my few resources of distraction.... My new maid told me in my husband's presence that her name was Isabella, and that she belonged to a family of French origin which had sought refuge in Prussia after the revocation of the Edict of Nantes, whose name she was bound to keep secret. In explanation of this mystery, Isabella told us of ships lost at sea, of great misfortunes that had followed, and of a commercial catastrophe which had completely ruined her father. We respected her secret, and her narrative, obscure though it was, seemed the more probable to my husband in that she expressed herself, both in French and in German, with great elegance, and she seemed to have received an excellent education.

"Isabella treated me with an amount of forethought which, notwithstanding her menial condition, sometimes struck me as exaggerated. Sometimes, also, I appeared to discover in her smile the expression of an arch comment upon certain of my habits, which doubtless failed to impress her as in keeping with my rank. I am generally allowed to possess that vivacity of imagination which is readily taken for wit; but I cannot hide from myself that a Countess whose career has been commenced on the boards of the Opera, long retains the ease of manner of her first condition of life: a manner that partakes of the natural is not so easily reformed.... Frankly, if my waiting-maid and I had been introduced together at the Court of Berlin, it is pro-

bable that the homage due to the Countess would have been paid to her.

"I soon became delighted with my new acquisition. Isabella's conversation and accomplishments often made me forget the weariness of my position. Some six months ago, the Landgrave had set himself to write his Memoirs upon the Seven Years' War. Upon my word, it only wanted that he should become an author to proclaim him the greatest bore of his age; and he doubtless wanted to perfect himself in this respect. But I owed to that the complete diversion of that phosphorescent love which vainly glittered around my life, like a will-o'-the-wisp without heat.... For him, it was a sterile fatigue the less: for me it was so much repose won and so much disgust the less.

"So long as Norkitten had maintained his vain pretence of proving his love, he had forbidden my waiting-maid to sleep in my room: a jealous man dreads even a shadow. But when the Count began to imagine himself a little Cæsar writing his Commentaries, the fire of his genius (if fire there were in him at all) replaced that of his conjugal fondness, and he desisted from tormenting my nights with his hopeless experiments. Bertha received permission to sleep in a room adjacent to mine.... I learnt later that this change in my nocturnal habits was the motive which inspired that good-hearted girl, and put into her head the project which she carried into execution on leaving me.

"So great was the Landgrave's literary preoccupation, that he now left me free to roam in the park, not exactly alone with my maid, but accompanied at some distance by himself, a distance great enough to prevent our feminine chatter from troubling the warlike recollections which he was working up in his study. One fine morning in the month of June 1777, Isabella and I were walking in the long alley in the park, some fifty paces in front of the Count, when my maid told me she had seen a very rare flower in a thicket, and suddenly ran forward and pushed through the foliage in order to gather this botanical rarity.... I was about to follow Isabella into the underwood, so as to admire this flower as early as possible, when I saw her return, and I seemed to observe a certain alteration in her appearance. In her hand she held a flower that did not impress me as par-

ticularly noticeable, although she continued to praise its beauties to me. As she spoke, her voice seemed to participate in the alteration that I had remarked upon her features, and I asked her if the impression made upon her by the discovery of so very insignificant a flower was sufficient to cause the trouble under which she was apparently labouring.

"No, Madame la Comtesse," replied Isabella, "my distress is due to another cause. Just now, as I hastily plucked this flower, I felt beneath my hand something as cold as ice: it was a huge adder, which wriggled upon the ground at my feet, and I nearly trod upon it."

"Poor Isabella, how frightened you must have been: anyone would have been distressed."

"Yes, Madame, any one would have been distressed, I can assure you."

"We returned to the castle, and during the rest of the day my maid spoke very little. When she did speak, I continued to notice the same difference in her voice. Moreover, the poor girl forgot where she had placed the various things in my room, and had to look for them every moment; I was obliged to tell her where she had put everything the day before.

"When it had become my time to retire, I said to Isabella:

"Come, child, let us see if you can manage to undress me without being troubled with the thought of that terrible adder .... Why, the serpent who tempted our Mother Eve did not make such a deep impression upon her."

"But then he was certain beforehand of his triumph, and did not assume so formidable an appearance as the one in the wood."

"Well, my dear Isabella, I can see you have not yet recovered from your fright. Why, you are trembling while you unlace me.... See, here is an easier task," I continued, sitting down, "undo my garters, they hurt me...."

"And raising my petticoat without any precaution, I enabled my maid at once to untie the offending riband, when suddenly, to my amazement, the girl, instead of her hands, applied to the limbs I had just uncovered lips that seemed to be of fire!"

"Isabella, what does this mean?" I exclaimed.

"‘Isabella is here no longer, Madame,’ replied, in a trembling voice, the person who remained hanging over my knees to the great prejudice of my chastity....

“‘What! then who ....?’

“‘I am Stanislas Count Delvinski.... I am a man who loves you passionately.... who has sworn to possess you at the risk of his life.... Isabella is my sister; she gave up her place to me this morning.... Do not treat me more unkindly than Eve treated the serpent who tempted her: I bring you the fruit of the Tree of Happiness.’

“Léonard, what can I say? I was distraught, I was beside myself. For four years I had been deprived of the happiness which Stanislas promised me. I could think of nothing to say.... A man knelt at my feet, young, beautiful, fond; and I gave myself to him without reflecting whether I had found a sincere lover, without asking him whether he would be true.... He has been both: Stanislas Count Delvinski is the cutter of our work-shop.”

“A Polish count, cutter to a flower-factory!”

“Love and destiny often bring about strange transformations,” resumed the ex-Landgravine of Norkitten, “as the end of my tale will show you. The scene I have just described to you took place at ten o’clock in the evening: it was not until ten in the morning that I remembered that Stanislas might have something to tell me, and the young count was the first to think of it.... we had been together for twelve hours.

“‘My name,’ said Stanislas, when he had resumed his woman’s apparel, ‘will have told you that I am a Pole. My sister and I are the sole heirs of Count Delvinski who died in battle during the troubles that preceded the enslaving of our unhappy country. We were born on the same day, and never were twins seen so alike. We were left orphans in our early youth, and lived in strict retirement in a small castle a few leagues from here, on the banks of the Vistula, loving one another after the manner of twins, and promising never to part. We were free and rich, and we never thought of seeking happiness outside the chaste love that united us. Four years passed, when last month I met you, my adorable Julie, when driving in the neighbourhood of Gumbinnen. From that moment I knew that there lay at the

bottom of my heart a source of felicity different from that which I enjoyed by the side of my gentle sister. "That is the beautiful Landgravine of Norkitten," said a friend with whom I was walking, and who perceived the keen emotion produced on me by your appearance. "A charming Frenchwoman, whom her husband, an old leather-breeches of the school of Frederick the Great, defends against the approach of the gallants, as he might defend a redoubt in battle. It is a great pity, egad! The Countess has a loving pair of eyes, and the Count does not give the impression of being a very fervent adorer.... There must be an over-abundance of leisure in the affections of that pretty turtle-dove from the banks of the Seine."

"From that day all my time was devoted to my search for means of reaching you. Fortune, the friend of lovers, favoured me. Bertha, your waiting-maid, proved to be the niece of an old retainer of our house, and she came to see him the week after my return from Gumbinnen. I soon discovered that the girl was devoted to you; I begged her to meet me in the park; I don't know what she imagined, but she came.

"'My dear Bertha,'" said I, going up to her, 'the happiness of my life depends on you....'

"'Monsieur le comte,'" replied she, blushing, "I am.... I am an honest girl...."

"'I know it, Bertha; and I have not the slightest designs upon your honour.... You live at the Castle of Norkitten."

"'Yes, monsieur le comte...."

"'You are attached to the service of the Countess...."

"'And I know what a melancholy existence can be led by a woman endowed with an immense fortune."

"'What does she need, Bertha?"

"'A husband, monsieur le comte.... a husband, though she has one."

"'I have been told so already, and I thought...."

"'That a lover might take the place of the husband of whom my mistress is deprived...."

"'Does that strike you as too audacious?"

"'Very frankly, no.... But our Castle is an inaccessible fortress, at whose foot all the tricks of the swains have failed up to the present.... for you are not the first, monsieur le

comte, that has been smitten with my mistress's charms.... But none has been able to penetrate to her. The Count is the most careful, the most cunning of jealous husbands: even my own sex is the object of his distrust and his precautions. During the five years that he has been married, I am the first lady's maid who has been permitted to sleep in Madame's apartment."

" " " Ah, Bertha, how happy you must be!"

" " " You mean to say, monsieur le comte, how happy you would be in my place," replied the Prussian waiting-maid, with the knowing smile of a *soubrette* of the Comédie Française.

" " " Your place, my dear child, I would pay two hundred frédérics d'or to possess."

" " " I would give it you for less than that, for I think that the change would be greatly to my mistress's advantage."

" " " And you think that the chances ...."

" " " Would be all in love's favour."

" " " Forgive me,' said Stanislas, interrupting himself, 'forgive me for venturing to repeat to you so freely my conversation with Bertha....'

" 'Continue,' I replied; 'you see that the girl did not promise too much.'

" Stanislas continued :

" " " To think that there is no practical expedient," said I, striking my forehead.

" " " An expedient?" said Bertha, with the vivacity that reveals a sudden inspiration. "I think I see one...." And continuing, after a moment's reflection, "But no, she would never consent...."

" " " Who, the Countess?"

" " " No, Mademoiselle Isabella."

" " " I don't understand, tell me what you mean, my dear Bertha."

" " " The astonishing resemblance between your sister and yourself.... almost the same height, the same accent...."

" " " Well?"

" " " I fear my plan is not practicable...."

" " " Tell me all the same, Bertha...."

" " " What I thought of is this: I would say that I was going to be married; I would leave the Countess, to be led to the

altar in some distant village.... The Landgrave, I believe, has sufficient confidence in me to take a new lady's maid upon my recommendation; Mademoiselle Isabella would present herself, be accepted, and ten days after...."

"“Ten days after, what would happen?” I cried, in soulful accents.

"“Cannot you guess, monsieur le comte? Ten days after, you would replace your sister.”

"“Indeed, the plan is.... But no, I could never propose to Isabella to take part in such an intrigue.... She is so chaste, so pure.... no, it is impossible....”

"‘At that moment, Bertha’s uncle came to fetch his niece to breakfast, and carried her away with him, making excuses for interrupting our conversation, to which the worthy man perhaps attributed a very different motive.

"‘Hardly had your waiting-maid departed, when the foliage on my right opened out, and Isabella appeared.... She seemed excited, and even troubled, and her features were discomposed.

"“Chance,” said she, “has made me a witness of your conversation with Bertha, and I do not share your opinion of the plan which she proposes.”

"“What! have you overheard us, Isabella....”

"“Yes, brother, and I know that you love the Countess of Norkitten. I know that a sister’s friendship is not sufficient for your happiness. And as this will always be the object of my dearest aspirations, I am very glad to be able to forward it, in a different way than by a sentiment whose powerlessness is to-day revealed to me for the first time....” And my sweet sister continued, with a sigh: “You are mistaken, Stanislas; I am willing to assist in the execution of Bertha’s proposal. I wish to remain ignorant,” she added, lowering her eyes, “of how you mean to realize the happiness which you expect from the Countess. Perhaps I shall be offending God by furthering your love.... but if I can prevent it from making you unhappy, I am ready to devote myself.”

"‘And the excellent Isabella pronounced these last words as though she had said: “I will sacrifice myself.” I will never tell any but you alone, my Julie, how my innocent sister, not knowing the limits at which a sister’s love should end, surren-

dered herself to it with all the power of her soul, without perceiving that it was being mingled with the passion of youth.... A fatal leaning, of which she must always be left in ignorance.

"We sent for Bertha to my room, and here we arranged the details of the bold plot which we proposed to carry out. I was drawn towards you with so much ardour that I had not the courage to combat my sister's generous resolution. And moreover, I said to myself, so as with a specious reasoning to stifle the idea that the sacrifice I was accepting from my sister was too great, "In this way we shall live apart, and the poor child will escape the martyrdom of a love which in her case alone is a crime. I shall be able to arrest her virtue at the edge of the precipice whose slope I myself would otherwise perhaps follow with sufficient alacrity to fall with her...."

"As to the consequences of my adventure, I took no heed of them. There is no more to tell you, dear Countess: you know how I came to be here."

"Yes, dear count," said I to that madman, whom I already loved with the fondness of passion, so many were the good qualities which I had discovered in him during the twelve hours we had spent together. 'Your resemblance to your sweet sister is too perfect to allow of the discovery of our dangerous secret; but how do you propose to play, even for a few days, the difficult part of a lady's maid.... If during the daytime Norkitten were to surprise you committing one of those pieces of awkwardness which always betray one sex in the clothes of the other...."

"Well then, Julie, fly with me.... We will cross the seas; we will go to the New World to live for each other alone."

"I should think the proposal most alluring, had I not more experience than you, very young Stanislas that you are. The bark of love is too light, you see, to load it thus with all one's fortunes. To begin with, I have paid very dearly for the advantages attached to the rank to which the Landgrave of Norkitten has raised me. It is only natural that I should seek to preserve them, not at the price of the happiness which I owe to your affection, but in endeavouring to conciliate the two. And would you yourself, count, abandon to her inexperience, to the dangers that surround her, that dear sister who loves

you so well? No, you owe her your support, and I will add that you almost owe it to me to find her a husband; for in this philosophic age, I should be almost as jealous of the outbursts of your ardent spirit as of the dear child's candid self-surrender.... And so we will have no elopement, my little count, no love in exile in the savannahs of America.... Let us enjoy the present with prudence, and seek an issue for a less dangerous future; but let us only make to our love those sacrifices which do not imperil our destinies!"

"During the following six months, the chaplain often civilly reproached me with the carelessness with which I now applied myself to my Latin studies. The worthy old man was proud of having assisted me to complete my rhetoric, but he was in despair lest I should escape the attractions of philosophy. I did not tell him that the study of Polish now engrossed me far more than that of Latin, and that, moreover, I had encountered a philosopher much more knowing than he in that branch of the science which I was most interested in cultivating.

"As to Norkitten, his preoccupation with his military lucubrations was such that four days would sometimes elapse without his setting foot in my chamber, and I was able to roam freely about the Castle without attracting his attention. Stanislas and I profited by our liberty to take long walks in the country. We often met Isabella, who, in order to be nearer to her brother, had installed herself in a long-deserted old castle which she owned on the banks of the Pregel. But it was not long before we perceived that the angelic creature's health was rapidly giving way. She had a little chronic cough, which made us fear that her lungs were attacked, and our sad presentiments were soon confirmed. One day Isabella did not appear at the meeting-place which we had appointed. Stanislas' distress was extreme; but the sun was about to set, and we were obliged to return to the Castle, lest we should arouse the suspicions which still slumbered in the Landgrave's breast.... Delvinski passed a restless night: his sister's name was constantly on his lips. Had I been ignorant till then of Isabella's more than sisterly love, my lover's indiscreet dreams would have revealed it to me.... I feared that this primitive love was shared by Stanislas, and told him so with tears in my eyes and sobs in my voice. I

was no longer in love in the manner of the little Julie, the dancer of the Théâtre Nicolet, who consoled herself with Diable the tight-rope dancer for Léonard the hair-dresser's infidelities. My love, from being the mere caprice of former years, had been refined into a sentiment. Stanislas succeeded in persuading me that I still occupied the first place in his heart. But his distress as to his sister's health continued; and my sham waiting-maid obtained the Count's permission to go and visit a sick relation living at some leagues from the Castle.

"What I am now about to tell you, Léonard, I did not hear from Delvinski until long after we had quitted Prussia. He found his sister in bed, and dying. She threw a haggard look towards the door as he entered; and when she saw that he was alone, a faint smile appeared upon her lips....

"Ah, there you are at last, Stanislas," said Isabella, in a dying voice, holding out a feverish hand to her brother. "There you are.... and without the other one.... No one at least will dispute with me the happiness of gazing at your features during the last hour of my life.... An hour is saying too much.... I shall not keep you as long as that from Julie.... But tell me, tell me, Stanislas, she is not there? When my soul leaves my body, she will not be there to cover with her kisses the lips on which I long to breathe out that soul which belonged to you.... Stanislas, the time for cruel efforts is past.... It was they that killed me; now that I am dying they will surely leave me free to utter the thoughts so long pent up in my poor heart.... I know how great is the sin which I have been committing for four years, without knowing it, and but a week, consciously....

"Seven days ago, Stanislas, you were to meet me at the end of the park of Norkitten. I arrived later than you. You were waiting for me..., and you were not waiting alone," said Isabella, increasing the volume of her voice, while a bright flame shot from her glance. "I approached noiselessly... you did not hear me.... I learnt to distinguish between the love of a mistress and that of a sister.... Stanislas, I knew from that moment that it was the first which devoured my breast.... and that is why I am dying.... God, who damns me for all eternity, has at least taken pity on the remainder of my sad life: He has cut it short...."

"‘Sister! Angel of goodness, of gentleness, of resignation!’ cried Stanislas, bursting into tears.

“‘Do not speak of angels, brother! See, see, look at that demon.... there, quite close to my bed.... listen to his hideous laugh, see how he opens his black wings to seize me. Ah! come, it is time, come and receive my soul....’ And drawing her brother towards her, the dying girl glued her mouth to his. Then pushing Stanislas’ head back, as though to find a passage for her last gasp, she murmured these fearful words: ‘I die regretting that I was never yours....’ Count Delvinski rose; his sister was dead.

Stanislas abandoned himself to the most violent grief. He did not appear at Norkitten for three days: on the fourth he returned in deep mourning. But while he was away, an event had taken place which had diverted my attention from a prolonged absence which would, in any other circumstance, have been more than I could bear without extreme sorrow. On the very day of Stanislas’ departure, my husband had wandered away from the Castle alone, dreaming of the formation of a line of battle. Abandoning himself wholly to his strategical meditations, he walked at random, perhaps calculating the depth of an attacking column, which prevented him from observing the depth of a precipice which he was approaching. At last he instinctively perceived it, but it was too late. The hapless Count of Norkitten rolled from rock to rock, down to the bottom of the abyss, where he broke his head. Two peasants, who had seen him disappear before they were able to warn him of his danger, with difficulty descended into the deserted quarry down which he had fallen, extricated him with still greater difficulty, and brought him back to the Castle, bleeding and devoid of consciousness.

The Landgrave had given me no happiness; but he had been kind to me and generous, and I felt deeply moved when I saw him in this piteous state. While mounted expresses flew to Gumbinnen, Elbing and even Koenigsberg to bring doctors back to Norkitten, a valet with some knowledge of surgery, who had followed the Count through his campaigns, brought out all his surgical science in order to apply a first dressing to the terrible wound he had received on his head; but trepanning

was necessary, and the faithful servant lacked instruments as well as knowledge for this operation.

"My poor husband suffered horribly. I had no thought but of compassion for him, and Stanislas would have met with a bad reception just then. During the night, four doctors or surgeons arrived almost at the same time, and lent the wounded man all the benefit of their science. Towards morning he fell into a quiet sleep.... In my first grief, I did not think of my interests, which in the case of the Count's death might be jeopardized to the extent of compelling my return to the boards of the Opera, provided always that they were willing to admit the Landgravine of Norkitten. Up to that time, no disposition had been made in my favour by my husband. But what for five years he had neglected now presented itself to his thoughts as a most urgent necessity. After resting some three hours, the Count awoke, called me to his bedside, and told me to send forthwith for a notary. A servant went at once to carry out this order, and the public officer soon appeared.

"'I wish to dictate my will to you,' said the Landgrave, with absolute calm. 'Write, sir; I shall be brief.'

"'I am at Your Lordship's orders, but we shall require two witnesses.'

"'Send for two people whom you know, and let them come without delay. Men in good health should not put off anything till the morrow: how much more essential is it that the dying should act upon their first inspiration.'

"'Ah, Monsieur le Comte!' I cried, in terror. 'Have you not heard the unanimous opinion of the doctors, who say that you will get well?'

"'My dear Julie,' replied the Count, with a sad smile, 'the doctors think, but I know. In three days I shall be no more.... But,' continued my husband, when the notary had left the room, 'the time is more than sufficient to repair the only serious fault with which I have to reproach myself.... My conduct towards you has been that of a tyrant. I gave you a brilliant and titled existence, and thought that I had the right to expect from you in return the most real sacrifices.... I deserved to be deceived: if I have not been so, it was through indifference on your part, for generosity in such a case would have been too simple:

revenge would have presented itself with such a good grace.'

"'Calm yourself, my friend,' said I, in a voice of sorrow which was in no way affected, and which alone prevented me from bursting into laughter at this praise of my simplicity. 'I never complained of my lot. What you call tyranny was in my eyes a love which flattered my pride. I have fulfilled my duties through affection for you, my dear husband, and I have not for one moment felt hurt by a bond which I cherished.'

"You see, Monsieur Léonard, that I had profited by my reading and my studies. I had just made the Count a speech that would have done honour to a Macchiavelli.

"'What sublime virtue! Another would have felt the burden of the chain: you consented only to see the gold with which each link was covered.'

"The notary with his two witnesses came in time to interrupt a conversation which I was sustaining with difficulty. It is no easy thing to improvise a scene of this kind.

"'The document which I am about to dictate to you, sir, will not be a long one,' said the Landgrave. 'Are you ready?'

"'Yes, Monsieur le Comte.'

"'Then write down: "I bequeath all my worldly possessions, my estates, forests, pastures, castles, manors, monies, jewels, securities, goods and chattels to Julie Niébert, Countess and Landgravine of Norkitten, in reward for her faithful affection, her virtue, and the kind cares which she has lavished upon me; leaving the said Countess full and entire liberty to reward according to the inspiration of her heart the good and loyal servants who served me before our marriage, and who have served both of us since."

"'I desire that this my will, as referring to the above-mentioned legacy, shall be fully executed, without any diversion in favour of whomsoever; I never having known the affection of a kinsman, and not desiring to favour the greed of those who never fail to be present at a rich man's death."

"'Pray formulate, master notary, the preamble and the closing phrases of this document. What you have written down is my unchangeable will.'

"Throughout that day, the Count's condition supported the expectations of the doctors. The night passed fairly well. But

at daybreak the terrible symptom known as ‘coma’ declared itself, and I soon read upon the face of the surgeon who watched by the bedside that progress was not being maintained. A consultation took place, the result of which was that the doctors decided to warn me that my husband would not live through the day.

“A few moments after this terrible communication, Stanislas returned, dressed in mourning for his sister. His gloomy apparel revealed to me the tragic cause of his prolonged absence.

“‘Two days ago it was your sister,’ I whispered to him. ‘To-day it is the Count of Norkitten.’

“‘I learnt yesterday the catastrophe which has taken place,’ replied Delvinski, in slow and solemn tones. ‘Ah! what strange events are contained in destiny’s breast!’

“Overcome with his grief, Stanislas stood by my side at the head of the bed. Norkitten did not at first see my pretended waiting-maid; but towards mid-day the comatose paroxysm subsided a little, and the Count recognized her, and saluted her with a little nod of his head, saying in a faint voice, ‘Good-morning, Isabella.’ Just then I perceived in my husband’s look the expression of a wearying surprise. I easily guessed the reason: it was Isabella’s heavy mourning. I bent over the Landgrave’s ear, and whispered, ‘She has lost her sister.’

“‘Tell her I am going to see her,’ replied Norkitten, with a heart-rending smile, ‘and that I will gladly take a message to her.’

“At this sinister philosophical suggestion, which Stanislas overheard, I saw him shiver.

“Meantime, the sun had almost run its course, without any perceptible change for the worse having taken place in the Count.... We heard five strike in the belfry-tower....

“‘One more hour past,’ said the Count, in fairly clear accents. ‘But the next....’ And his lips endeavoured to articulate the rest of the sentence, without succeeding in making it heard.

“The setting sun had reached the level of the crenulated wall which faced the room in which we were, and darted down, between two turrets, an oblique ray, which penetrated through a tall casement, and lit up the dying features of my husband.... I was about to draw the curtains of the bed when:

“‘No, my dear Julie,’ said the Count, ‘do not deprive me

of the last visit of my mighty friend. Do you not see that he has come to pay me his adieux?’

“‘And I too have come to pay you my adieux, Count of Norkitten,’ cried in a resounding voice a man who threw open the door of a closet. ‘Your disinherited nephew has come to do you a service worthy of your affection for him.... Ah, Landgrave of Norkitten, Julie Niébert has well deserved to be made your universal legatee! Know that Isabella, her waiting-maid, is none other than Count Stanislas Delvinski....’

“‘Count Stanislas Delvinski!’ cried the dying man, raising himself convulsively to a sitting posture.... And then he fell heavily back upon his pillow.... The Count of Norkitten had ceased to live.

“Meantime Stanislas leapt into the closet to seize the villain who had hastened the Count’s death. But an open casement and a ladder placed against a trellis in the garden deprived Delvinski of all hope of catching the contemptible fugitive.... He returned to the room with an uncertain step.... I showed him the Count’s lifeless body, and murmured in a voice drowned with sobs:

“‘The terrible secret has gone to Heaven with him....’

“Stanislas sank into a seat, and abandoned himself to a silent reverie.... As for me, I fell upon my knees at the head of the bed and prayed. But before long I rose firmly, and addressing Stanislas, I exclaimed:

“‘Count, you must leave me.... You and I escorting the funeral bier of the Count of Norkitten.... it would be horrible!’

“‘I understand, Countess. I leave you; but I will watch over you.... You have much to fear from that nephew and his disappointed greed.... When shall I see you again, Julie?’

“‘Stanislas, at this moment in the presence of that corpse, how can I find an answer to such a question?’

“Delvinski left me without replying. In the evening I received a billet from him, informing me that he had encountered the nephew roaming in the park, challenged him, and shot him to the heart. ‘I shall return to my castle on the Vistula.... I will await you there.’

“The count had to wait a whole month, while I devoted myself to all the duties prescribed by my position, and to those

which Norkitten had bequeathed to me.... I caused my name to be blessed both for what I did in fulfilling my husband's last wishes, and for what I added by way of benefits of my own accord. Not one of my servants, not one of the poor in the town of Norkitten, but had his share in my generous gifts.

"One evening, the sound of carriage-wheels was heard beneath Count Delvinski's windows.... it was the widow of the Landgrave of Norkitten.... Stanislas knew that it was I by the sound of my footstep. He rushed to meet me, and received his fond Julie in his arms, drunk with love....

"In a week's time, we set out for Paris. We had decided that it was essential that we should try to drown in the whirlpool of that noisy capital the traces of an adventure which had already been spread abroad in Prussia, and had not remained free from scandal. Soon after our arrival in France, we heard that the German imagination, so bent upon the marvellous, had added to our story all the phantasy of a legend, in which good and evil sprites played their parts, with spontaneous illuminations of all the windows of the Castle of Norkitten, ghosts walking upon the battlements, sounds of chains repeated nightly at the mystic hour, and the prolonged tolling of the belfry bell, without any human assistance.

"It was impossible to return to a country where the count and I had acquired so deplorable a celebrity. We resolved to sell all our possessions in Prussia and Poland, and to live for ever on the smiling banks of the Seine. The sale of all our property produced the enormous capital of three millions, which we proposed to invest in a common fund. We determined, moreover, that in order to remain lovers, we should not become husband and wife, but that for the sake of decorum we should have two separate residences. This was a more than sufficient precaution to satisfy the susceptibilities of a none too scrupulous Court, and one hundred and fifty thousand livres a year should suffice to keep up this two-fold establishment, which for four or five years was, in reality, no more than one.

"Our love, you will agree, my dear Léonard, was a vigorous growth. It resisted five years of cohabitation in Paris, amid all the temptations of frivolity and inconstancy! Our affection obtained a reputation for longevity which covered us with ridi-

cule; and at the commencement of 1786, Stanislas and I recognized at the same time that it was no longer possible to keep up this eccentricity without becoming a byword to society. This seemed to us so self-evident, that the count had since the last fortnight taken to adoring a charming dancer at the Opera, while I had fallen madly in love with a young captain in the Queen's Dragoons.... And so we agreed to separate on our roads through life, to divide our joint property, and no longer to visit each other unannounced.

"Till then we had neglected to purchase any landed estate, in spite of our notary's repeated protestations. The result was that when we came to divide our goods, we found that we had been living at the rate of one hundred thousand instead of fifty thousand crowns a year.... We promised the worthy notary to be more economical in future.

"Our amicable separation was celebrated by a great dinner which the count gave me, and which, after a riotous evening with our common friends, ended, will you believe me, with all the fond luxury of a first night of love.... If you wish to learn the value of a thing, deprive yourself of it.... The next morning our attachment had redescended to the dull level of friendship. We swore to lend one another at all times, in every place, our mutual assistance, should fortune betray us, or any disaster come knocking at our door....

"Four years passed without my seeing Delvinski, except on a casual meeting at a ball, at the play, at the Tuileries: occasions upon which one smiles from a distance and waves a hand.... God! how those four years were spent on both sides! But I will pass over the episodes of a life of pleasure, and come to a certain morning when my notary walked into my room, wearing on his features an expression of unaccustomed gravity.

"'Madame,' said he, 'I regret to have to give you bad news after so many times in vain endeavouring to make you listen to the counsels of prudence. But the accounts which I hold in my hand, and which I now place on your toilet-table, will show you that the money you left in my charge was exhausted more than six months ago....'

"'Heavens, monsieur, what are you saying? And how have I been able to live since then?'

“ ‘ You have been living upon the capital of M. le Comte Delvinski, who authorized me to pay you until further orders any sums that you might draw upon me for.’

“ ‘ O best of friends ! ’

“ ‘ An excellent friend indeed, for M. le Comte is no less ruined than yourself, Madame. And now there is this new thing : Count Delvinski has withdrawn from my charge the little capital that remained to him, and has just set out for Poland, where he hopes to revive the cause of his nation, favoured by the revolutionary movement which burst out among us last year. . . . A common whim in the lives of men with active imaginations : no sooner are they ruined, than they become conspirators.’

“ ‘ Well and good ; if Count Delvinski restores the Kingdom of Poland, I am sure he will think of me . . . . But meanwhile, I must be able to support myself in Paris . . . .’

“ ‘ If you at last acknowledge that order is an indispensable element of preservation from ruin, the contents of your jewel-case and the furniture of this house, which you were not willing to purchase, may yet place you beyond the reach of necessity.’

“ ‘ My jewels, yes ; but the furniture, no : I have renewed it recently in exchange for some old Pompadour furniture, which disgraced me, and I owe a considerable difference on the exchange . . . . Pray, then, monsieur, do me yet one more service ; see my upholsterer, and try to persuade him to take back his things, so that at least I shall have nothing more to pay him.’

“ ‘ I will make that my business ; the rogue will make a large enough profit without asking you for any more . . . .’

“ ‘ One more favour, O virtuous notary. I should be cheated if I sold my diamonds myself : do not refuse to do so for me.’

“ ‘ I consent ; but only in your presence . . . . Come, Madame, let us examine the jewels, and see what we may hope to realize by them.’

“ I went to my secrétaire, and returned pale with fright, holding in my hand a letter which I passed over to my notary, after casting my eyes over it. It was in the hand-writing of the captain in the Queen’s Dragoons, and ran as follows :

“ ‘ Dear Countess, I make bold to borrow your jewels, some-

what freely perhaps, but the illustrious name I bear compels me in honour to emigrate.... Your diamonds will aid me in upholding the cause of the King; and when we drive away from his Throne the National rabble which dares to attack the prerogatives of the Crown, you will have acquired a good title to His Majesty's gratitude.... No doubt, my dear Countess, you will then obtain a *tabouret*\* in the Queen's apartments....'

"'And meantime, Madame,' cried my notary, in a fury, 'that titled pickpocket prevents you from having a rush-bottomed chair in your own house.'

'Well, I should not have thought him capable of it.'

"Upon my word, Madame, I admire you. You are completely ruined, and you speak of it with the most philosophic ease and hilarity."

"The next day I called upon Madame T., the artificial-flower manufacturer, who had just opened a branch in London. I had always been one of her best customers, and she received me with that very special graciousness which trades-folk always keep in reserve for the purchasers who buy largely and pay regularly.

"'My dear Madame T.', said I, 'I have come to ask you for something very much out of the common.'

"'What is that, Madame la Comtesse? a dress-trimming of roses? a muslin gown with embroidered flowers? roses with tears of dew? The last is the very newest thing we have....'

"'No, no; I know of something newer still: my vocation....'

"'Aha! has Madame la Comtesse invented a new flower? Everything is invented nowadays, even nature.'

"'I am not thinking of anything of the kind; what I wish to ask you for, Madame T., is a seat at one of your work-tables, either in London or Paris.'

"'Ah, I understand. Madame la Comtesse wishes to learn how to make flowers: it is quite the fashion now.... I have a score of pupils in Paris whom I teach what I do not know myself. But they insist upon it, and pretend that they can only learn anything from me.'

"'My dear lady, I know how to make flowers as well and

\* A *tabouret* or stool, equivalent to the right to sit in the Queen's presence.

perhaps better than the cleverest of your workwomen, and I have come ask you to employ me so that I may earn my living.'

"Madame la Comtesse is jesting."

"I am speaking very seriously."

"Impossible."

"I am ruined, my dear lady, ruined from garret to basement. I had a jewel-case left worth some two hundred thousand livres; but it was wanted to strengthen the King upon his Throne.... and they borrowed it..... without asking my leave, it is true. I have nothing left.... nothing but your protection."

"Dear Heaven, you are quite welcome to it. But what is he use of a protection which enables you to earn a small crown \* a day!"

"As much as that, Madame T.!"

"And even a little more, if you are an expert."

"I am very expert, and if you wish it, I will invent nature, since that is the fashion.... But I will beg you to take me into your London house, if possible.... You can imagine, the change might appear sudden to my friends in Paris."

"I am leaving this day week for England, and will take you with me, Madame la Comtesse...."

"No, you will take with you Julie, the flower-maker."

"I had been here some six months; Madame T., delighted with my intelligence, had placed me at the head of her work-shop, when one evening I was told that a gentleman was asking for me in the parlour. I went downstairs.

"It was Count Stanislas Delvinski! He had not succeeded in restoring the Polish throne, and he had come to ask me to share my fortune with him by giving him a post as cutter in the work-rooms under my charge."

\*A small crown was equal to three livres or francs; a large crown (*gros écu*) to six livres.

## CHAPTER XII

The emigrants in London—Their industry, artifices, and intrigues—The marquis's trunk—The inventory of a treasure.

THE errand that had brought me to London was now completed, and in March 1792, I prepared for my departure to the banks of the Rhine, where I was to carry out the Queen's wishes. It was important that Her Majesty should know the characters, habits and even the occupations of the emigrants collected at that spot. This was indispensable in order that she might know exactly how great a reliance might be placed upon the promises of those nobles, and if their assistance could really be reckoned on for the restoration of the monarchy in France.

The information I was able to transmit to the Queen from London was not, alas! of a very reassuring nature. The noble fugitives did appear to me to interest themselves the least in the world in the Throne and the altar whose names figured so regularly in their official correspondence. I saw them only endeavouring to make their present circumstances as comfortable as possible, by means of every imaginable intrigue and artifice. London had suddenly become a sort of universal academy, in which the more or less titled Frenchmen appointed themselves professors or *virtuosi*, driven by the struggle for existence. Here a marquis opened a philharmonic society; yonder an intellectual concert was organized by a knight of Malta. In St. James's Street was a fencing academy, under the management of a brigadier-general, while a drawing-school prospered but slowly under the direction of a captain in the navy.... More than once I came across a certain countess, around whom three years before had fltered all the butterflies of the *Œil-de-Bœuf*, hurrying along to give a private piano-lesson in town, her pretty

feet almost touching the pavement through her worn shoes, and her solitary black velvet gown splashed with mud.... But sadder still, this countess, whom I had known so coquettish, so capricious, so bewildering with her fickle passions, who used to fling a sigh to her adorers as one flings an alms to a beggar, was now, it was said, reduced to abandoning herself to the caresses, well mingled with hiccoughs, of the "milords" deprived of their favourite French dancers.... Ah, what a frightful extremity !

Let me tell you a story of an artifice of which Madame T. was the dupe, not many days before my first departure from London.

A Breton marquis, with a pedigree as old as the rocks of Morbihan, came one morning to the famous flower-manufacturer with a letter of recommendation from the Princesse d'Hennin.... The noble emigrant announced himself as the Marquis de Bellemour. He had a handsome figure, a gallant air, and a well-turned leg. Had Madame T. been less willing to oblige her countrymen, she would have considered that these qualities were sufficient to enable their possessor to become the princess's protégé, and that the latter would not have troubled her head about any further guarantees. But the worthy lady took no thought of this consideration, and asked the marquis in what way she could be of service to him.

"There are two things which would save my life, madame, and in these the princess is no longer in a position to assist me...."

"Name them, monsieur."

"First, madame, I am in the most urgent need of a loan of fifty guineas, with which to discharge a debt which admits of no delay. And secondly, and this is the more important of the two, you would be doing me the most unspeakable service if you would cause to be sent over from Nantes a trunk lying at the carriers' in that town, for which this receipt was handed to my noble father. This trunk, Madame T., contains all my family diamonds: they are worth over two hundred thousand livres, and that is why I am appealing to your kind assistance.... If the trunk were addressed to me direct, the patriots would confiscate it. It must be sent to me through the intermediary of a business house.... you understand, Madame T."

"Perfectly, monsieur le marquis."

"So soon as the trunk arrives," continued the elegant Frenchman, turning on his heel in his best Court manner, "I will repay you the fifty guineas which you will be good enough to lend me, and I shall be your debtor for life."

"Really, monsieur, it is not worth so much gratitude as that;" and turning to her cashier, Madame T. told him to hand fifty guineas to monsieur le marquis. "I will write to a merchant whom I know at Nantes to hurry the dispatch of your trunk," continued the too confiding lady, "and I hope that by the direct sea road you will receive your property within a fortnight."

In fourteen days, the famous trunk was unloaded from a merchant-vessel at the foot of the ancient Tower of London, and carried forthwith to Madame T.'s establishment. The sea had been rough during the crossing, and as the aforesaid famous trunk contained, in addition to the Bellemour family diamonds, a precious Stradivarius violin, valued at thirty thousand francs, which was liable to injury from the damp, they hastened to inform M. le marquis at the address he had given of the arrival of his treasure, so that he might no lose no time in coming to open it. The French nobleman had left for the country; but he had left behind him a letter addressed to Madame T., and authorizing her to open the trunk herself.

This task, having regard to the diamonds contained in the trunk, was a very delicate one! But supposing the Stradivarius were spoilt! Madame T. therefore acted with discretion, and begged Madame la Princesse d'Henmin, the marquis's friend, to be so good as to call upon her, explaining the reason why she desired her presence. Eight or nine other members of the emigration were convoked for this interesting opening ceremony. In the presence of so goodly a number of witnesses, all the good lady's scruples vanished. The trunk was opened.... and here is an exact inventory of the articles found in it:

|  | livres    sous |
|--|----------------|
| A Mirecourt violin,* cracked and soulless, valued at | 3    10        |
| A pair of boot-trees . . . . .                       | <u>2    5</u>  |
| Carried forward . . .                                | 5    15        |

\* Mirecourt is a little town in the Vosges, where musical instruments are manufactured on a cheap and wholesale scale.

|  | livres    | sous     |
|--|-----------|----------|
| Brought forward . . . . .  | 5         | 15       |
| A sky-blue taffety coat, of French cut, having seen<br>at least eight months' wear. . . . .  | 1         | 10       |
| Two pairs of nankeen breeches, which have been<br>cleaned from sixty to seventy times. . . . .   | 1         | "        |
| A sort of walnut dressing-case, containing six pots<br>of pomade and two almost empty pots of rouge . . .  | 1         | 5        |
| Item one pair of false moustachios, one false front<br>and three wigs: together. . . . .   | "         | 15       |
| At the bottom of the trunk, twenty-two comedy<br>parts, weighing three pounds, at three sous the pound   | "         | 9        |
| A miniature representing a group composed of a<br>man and a woman, valued by Madame la Princesse<br>d'Hennin, who undertakes to dispose of it as a model, at | <u>3</u>  | 15       |
| Total . . . . .  | <u>14</u> | <u>9</u> |

And thus Madame T. was plundered to the tune of some fifty two guineas by M. le Marquis de Bellemour, who was no more than a mere play-actor, who had gone abroad to follow his art, with certain variations.

"My loss is nothing to speak of," said the worthy soul to the princess; "but I advise Your Highness to find out more in future about the people you take under your protection...."

"I must confess," replied Her Highness, roguishly, "that I only knew this one under the most favourable circumstances."

And the fine lady took her leave, not forgetting to pay Madame T. a very flattering compliment upon the freshness of her wreaths and bouquets.

## C H A P T E R XIII

I leave London—Lovers' correspondence—Honorary paternity—Commencement of the war—M. le Comte d'Artois' head-quarters—His Royal Highness's archives—The sword of Catherine II.

I LEFT London in the end of March, 1792, and embarked at Deal for Ostend, where I landed after a ten hours' crossing.

My object now was to commence a series of communications to the Queen upon the habits of the emigration, and I may begin by saying that there was no lack of information awaiting me at Coblenz, Cologne and the surrounding districts. I even gathered some of such a nature that I refrained from transmitting it to Her Majesty. The events that had occurred in her life since 1789 had quite changed her character. The picture of the oddities of the age now no longer amused, but angered her. Yet in the observations which I was able to make during my stay on the Rhine, there was a certain moral or immoral strain which I should be sorry to see omitted entirely from my souvenirs, especially as it may possess some slight grain of interest for the historian.

Discretion in love was never a virtue of my countrymen. During my sojourn among the emigration I used to receive at third, and sometimes even at second hand, many truly touching details of correspondence. Here, for instance, is a copy of a letter with which M. le Comte de Jarnac, a general officer in the army of M. le Comte d'Artois, amused his friends before lighting his pipe with it:

“Aix, Friday, May 5, 1792.

“Will you soon return, to trample on the patriots and fling them into all the prisons of France, if indeed there are enough to hold them all?

“But do you especially, my love, my life, my joy, return

promptly. How happy shall I be to have you by my side once more! I long to spoil you for a whole month, to make you forget all your hardships in my arms. Take care of your health, and remember that there waits for you a very loving, very yielding, very obedient woman, who would be hurt were she deceived in her expectations.

"And meantime let us be content to love one another in imagination. I send thousands and thousands of kisses to my dearest chick. Be moderate, and keep a guard on your inflammable nature! You know what I mean . . . . I want all for myself, and will brook no sharing with another . . . .

"You speak of giving up your horse. That might tire you. I forbid you to economize in that matter. I want you to come back strong and well: I shall make no allowances!"

When you read that letter, you are not surprised to see that it is dated from Aix and in the month of May. In fair Provence beauty's springtime is a burning summer, which sometimes even commences in the winter . . . . Zounds, Monsieur le Comte de Jarnac! it was very well for your loving correspondent to propose to make you forget your hardships; but your fatigues! Well, as the Princes' army did not succeed in flinging the patriots into the prisons of France, we may presume that our ardent Provençale was driven to content herself long with love in imagination . . . . And I think the count must have been pretty well convinced of this, when he entertained his friends with the love-letters of his brown-haired mistress.

If the ladies left behind in France showed themselves excessively affectionate towards their emigrant lovers, those who were themselves living in exile from France were not always so careful to keep faith with the husbands or lovers whose adventurous destiny they shared. M. de Montchal, a Knight of Malta in the Princes' army, received a letter which bore no signature, but which was generally attributed, by the light of circumstantial evidence, to Madam L. . . . de M. . . . . y. It was dated from Liège. This letter adds so original, so novel a page to the history of love, that I have no hesitation in copying it in its entirety into my souvenirs. It is a faithful duplicate of the rough draft left by the writer in the grate in her room at Liège.

"I am writing to you with all confidence, my dear chevalier, te beg you to do me an important service. I am so sure of your friendship that I do not believe you can refuse me. I told you at Aix-la-Chapelle about my misfortune. You were very sympathetic, and gave me the most touching proofs of your attachment, with the result that mine for you was very greatly augmented. I am now much more unhappy than when you saw me this summer: I am in the most critical position imaginable. I have to go to Brussels immediately, because my means do not permit me to leave my son Théodore any longer at college, and the child would be left helpless in the street if I were not at Brussels when his term is over. I am therefore obliged to leave here, and to complete my misfortune I shall be obliged to take with me an unfortunate child to which I gave birth this day month. They refuse to take charge of it here during my absence, and I cannot allow my son (the one at Brussels) to die of hunger. Yet this would be his fate if I were to abandon him; and although I detest his father (a monster of a husband, who had the pretension that he alone should enjoy his wife), his son is none the less dear to me .... Poor little man! He is not the cause of my misfortune, and his own wretchedness makes me cherish him and increases my fondness for him.

"That is the awful position in which I am placed. I have to drag a miserable child about with me, and I must reveal to my sister a secret which I never intended that she should know, but which it is now impossible that she should not become acquainted with, since it is only through her that I can find a nurse. This piece of news will come upon my sister as a thunder-clap; she will lament over me and that poor little creature. Then will follow remonstrances and reproaches; for she is excessively pious. I must needs endure her anger; there is no way of avoiding it, and I must resign myself to listening patiently to all she has to say. My child's life depends upon it.

"But it is essential that my sister should not know that my pregnancy dates back to Turin. When we arrived at the Thal, she rallied me about you, because she saw how eager I was to see you again; and were she to know that I was then already two months with child, she would be furious at my

having two lovers at the same time (*that sister had evidently not lived at Court*). Far from welcoming me under such circumstances, she would indignantly drive me away . . . . Dear chevalier, there are things which cannot be told on paper; moreover, if I wrote them to you, all these details would only weary you. I will tell you all when I see you; but I must warn you that if my sister drives me to bay and compels me to name the father of my child, which I will try to prevent her from doing as long as I can, I must tell her that it is you, my dear chevalier; and after all, it would be only a slight shifting of circumstances.

"This cannot matter to you, my dear chevalier. You will never have to undergo the smallest annoyance by consenting to what I desire, and you will be extricating from a great embarrassment a mother in tears, who is at her wits' end, and who will permit you, if you have to suffer the least offensive pleasantry on my account, to produce as proofs this letter and the little draft note which I enclose you.

"In this way you will be pledged to nothing, except to write me still more affectionate letters than those which you have sent me hitherto, to address me in the singular, and in a word, to pretend to be the father of my child. This little stratagem will do nobody harm, and will on the contrary procure me infinite peace of mind. Why should you not consent? why should you refuse to do this little service to one who is as devoted to you as I am?

"Charles (*so there were three of them!*) would have agreed to this with the best grace in the world, had not the period been too remote for possibility; but there is nothing to be said in your case, and I might well have been the mother of your son, had I not been already burdened with a load on my arrival in Germany.\*

"When you have weighed all these reasons, you will, I am sure, be happy to oblige me. Let me hear from you speedily, my dear chevalier, and relieve me from the mortal distress which your silence causes me. I constantly fear lest I should not know what has become of you. You know the tender affection I bear

\*M. de Montchal, eager to prove the capacity for paternity of a Knight of Malta, and seeing that Madame L . . . . de M . . . . y was "burdened with a load," had apparently done his best in another quarter.—*Author's Note.*

you, and I have enabled you to judge of the painful plight I am in .... You so often promised to write to me! Why, if you love me, do you torture me so?

"Adieu, dear chevalier; I embrace you, as I love you, with all my heart. My compliments to Charles and to your dear papa. Tell La Roche-Aymon that I am vexed with him for not writing to me this twelvemonth, although I have sent him four letters to the camp .... I will be revenged on him when I see him (*this gives reason to suppose a fourth tender passion*). As to the draft letter enclosed, I beg that you will copy it and send it to me, and it will be necessary that all the rest should be in the same style."

M. de Montchal was a good-hearted, hospitable and obliging man:

Des chevaliers *maltais* tel est le caractère.

The service demanded of him was a little unusual; but Madame L... de M... y was handsome, she had been loving to him, and might be so again, and an old love revived is not to be disdained in time of war, although the scarcity of compliant beauties may at that time be but little felt. M. de Montchal accepted the post of papa *honoris causa* offered to him by the former lady of his thoughts, and copied the draft letter which she had sent him, and which ran as follows:

"I can never express to you, my adorable friend, the joy I felt on learning of your happy delivery. You knew the pleasure such agreeable news would give me, and you did well to lose no time in writing to me. How I thank the Lord for your preservation! And so it is true that my dear and beloved Mimi has made me a father.... Ah, how I love that dear child... and what happiness for me to have it by you! Take great care of it, my dearest one, and have no fear for the future of that little being, whom I love and cherish more than I can say. Kiss my dear little Gaston heartily for me, and accept a thousand and yet a thousand fond kisses and caresses for yourself. Adieu, my sweetheart; forgive me for leaving you so quickly to-day, but duty calls me away from you. I am leaving for the siege of Thionville, which we shall bombard to-night. I will give

you news of the army another time. Adieu, once again. I am ever your fond and faithful friend."

The correspondence between M. de Montchal and Madame L... de M...y continued in this strain for some time. But as the latter had foreseen, the chevalier's comrades greeted the news of his paternity as a benevolent action, so much doubt did they consider to be cast by the lady's gallantries upon the authorship of the work which he had consented to attribute to himself. At last in self-defence the chevalier displayed the letter in which Gaston's mamma authorized him to reveal the trick to which he had lent himself; and it was the divulging of all this that completed my initiation into the secret of this extraordinary love-affair.

The first war of the Revolution had now begun. The Duke of Brunswick, at the head of the Prussian army, held in leading-strings (it is the only fitting phrase) the most illustrious, but still more undisciplined, cohort known as "the Princes' army," and entered French territory on one side, while General Clerfayt \* attacked it on the other. Thionville, Verdun and Lille were laid siege to...

I had for some months been awaiting M. le Comte d'Artois, who was on a journey to St. Petersburg. He returned at last, bringing with him a sword with which the Empress Catherine had presented him. His Royal Highness, upon whom I waited in a castle in the neighbourhood of Longwy, received me with that charming airiness of manner which he retained through life, in misfortune and in prosperity, so long as love and money remained at his beck and call.

"Well, Léonard," said he, "so here you are with the army. Do you scorn hair-powder now, and are you longing for the smell of gunpowder? It would not surprise me, my lad: the King my brother, when he substituted the baton of a marshal of France for the stick of cosmetic in your satchel, already initiated you into the alarms and excursions of war."

"Excursions is the word, Monseigneur, and mine, although

\* General Count Clerfayt, 1733—1798, commanded an army of 12,000 Austrian troops. He won frequent successes over the Republican forces, more especially in 1795, when he repulsed three French armies in succession and ended by raising the siege of Mayence.

entrusted to a hair-dresser, would have succeeded, if the King had had friends more active to support the movements of the Marquis de Bouillé."

His Royal Highness, with a trick which he had retained from boyhood, passed his tongue three times over his lips, bit them for a second or two, and changed the conversation.

"Has the Queen given you any message for me?" asked the Prince, pulling on one of his boots, for I had caught him as he was getting out of bed.

"Yes, Monseigneur," I replied, "and if Your Royal Highness would grant me a moment's interview in private, I will communicate various matters to you which Her Majesty did not think fit to entrust to paper."

"Leave me, you others," said the prince, turning to the Marquis de Digoine and some officers who were present.

"Has Your Royal Highness no orders to give for attacking the party of Blues that showed itself within gunshot this morning?" asked the marquis as he was leaving the room.

"An order to attack . . . you had better ask the Marquis de La Queueille, my adjutant-general: it is his business . . ."

"Very well, Monseigneur. We hope to cut that body of Jacobins into pieces in an hour or two," replied M. de Digoine, bringing his heels together and ringing his spurs in the Prussian manner. "We took a Redcap in reconnoitring last night."

"Was the Jacobin's head inside?" asked the Prince, smiling.

"Yes, Monseigneur," replied the marquis, stolidly . . .

"That is right, gentlemen; those are successes," said His Royal Highness.

The officers went out.

"Now, my dear Léonard, speak," continued the Prince, pulling on his second boot.

I gave M. le Comte d'Artois the Queen's messages in full detail.

"My poor Léonard," said the Prince, after listening to me attentively, "I am really sorry the Queen did not send you to Monsieur rather than to me: he is so very observant. In order to tell Her Majesty all that she wishes to know, it would be necessary to go very laboriously through a vast mass of papers, and none of my suite has the time to busy himself with it . . ." And His Highness showed me two tables placed close

together and covered with enormous heaps of letters, the greater part of which had not been unsealed. "You see there is enough there to frighten away the most inveterate rummager . . . always excepting my brother of Provence . . . Oh, he's different: I remember, in the time of those damned Notables who drove us here, with what delight he used to wade among the petitions, remonstrances, supplications, and all the litter of papers with which we were inundated. But I have an idea," continued the Prince, gaily; "why should not you, Léonard, who are only with the army as an amateur, undertake to gather from all this correspondence the information which the Court desires? You can follow my staff for a fortnight, with a wagon loaded with all that baggage, and when your work is done, you will be able to report on it directly to Their Majesties . . ."

"Monseigneur, I will obey Your Royal Highness's commands."

"Well done, Léonard; you are now promoted to be my secretary *pro tempore* . . . Tell me, is not my hair a little out of curl?"

"A touch of the comb will put it right."

And the Prince's secretary *pro tempore* re-arranged the curls of his *oiseau royal* and covered them with a sprinkling of powder. M. le Comte d'Artois next donned, with my assistance, his uniform as Colonel-General of the Swiss Guards, and asked for his sword.

"Which one, Monseigneur?"

"The Empress Catherine's . . . I must be seen wearing it at the review . . ."

"Will your Royal Highness want to draw it? I think it sticks in the scabbard somewhat."

"The deuce! . . . Here, let us each pull one end, Léonard . . . I'll take the hilt, you the scabbard . . . Good, here it comes . . . I must mount my horse now . . . Here are my archives; you can take possession, Léonard, this minute."

The Prince went off, and I availed myself of his permission.

## CHAPTER XIV

A letter from Monsieur to Prince Hohenlohe—Warlike letters of the emigrants—Love-letters—A diplomatic note—Madame de Balby's advice—Monsieur does not follow it.

THE first letter I laid my hand upon was the copy of one written by Monsieur to Prince Hohenlohe on the 6th of September 1792. It opens exactly like the speeches His Royal Highness used to deliver to his huntsmen in his hunting-days in the Forest of Sénart:

"Well, Cousin," wrote His Royal Highness, "I am writing to Your Highness after thinking over the replies of the garrison of Thionville and the effects of our last night's cannonade. We cannot conceal from ourselves that those effects are practically *nil*, and that the few guns expected from Longwy will not be able to do much good. To miss capturing Thionville is no great thing in itself; but it matters much to public opinion that the first place attacked by Your Highness's army and ours should be taken. We can only think of one way of remedying this inconvenience, and that is to bring up from Luxemburg four or five ten-inch mortars and the same number of twenty-four-inch guns, so as to overwhelm the town with bombs and cannon-balls and compel it to surrender. We shall thus avenge the blood of the brave Prince of Waldeck,\* and compel the enemy, who are daily growing more audacious, to show us proper respect. Luckner's† retreat should strengthen our hand. Shall it be

\* Christian Augustus Prince of Waldeck, 1744—1798. Léonard speaks of him in a note as having been killed beneath the walls of Thionville. He lost an arm there, and died in Portugal six years later. But the impression seems to have prevailed that he was dead, as see Madame de Balbi's letter on p. 153.

† Nicolas Luckner, a Marshal of France, who passed over to the Revolution, and was very handsomely guillotined in 1794.

said that at the very moment when he is leaving Thionville to its own resources, we renounce our efforts to capture that fortress? We beg Your Highness to give prompt orders, and our success is assured."

We know that Prince Hohenlohe gave prompt orders, that the ten-inch mortars and the twenty-four-inch guns arrived, and that the town was overwhelmed with bombs. But the "enemy" showed no respect. I still remember with what repugnance I copied down the word.... The "enemy" were my own fellow-countrymen, and he who thus described them was a French Prince.

The garrison and population of Thionville, commanded by the valorous Wimpfen, defended the heap of stones to which the town was reduced, and the siege had to be raised. And I looked upon Monsieur's letter as an outburst of martial ardour, aroused between the dessert and the coffee by one of those mighty processes of digestion which send flying to the brain the fumes of the generous wines consumed during dinner. His Royal Highness must have moved about violently in his chair while composing that allocution.

Both among the packets which still remained sealed, and among the heaps of papers which had been piled up unread, I found a number of letters addressed, to the care of the Prince, to gentlemen serving under his orders. It was these especially which offered me many curious details, and were characteristic of the spirit of the emigration. In one of them, intended for the Marquis de Digoine, his fond correspondent, who signed herself Minette, spoke thus of the illustrious prisoners of the Temple:

"Religion alone can now sustain the King and his poor family. They will doubtless be happier in the next world than in this, for they have already passed through their purgatory.

"Adieu, my friend; accept a kiss from your Minette."

I decided not to include this document among the evidences of devotion which I reported to the Royal Family; but there were yet more consoling papers to be found among what the Prince called his archives. For instance, Madame Bouverot wrote to her husband, an aide-de-camp to the Duc de Villequier:



"Twenty-two hours on horseback, my poor friend! how I pity you! But the remainder of the campaign will be less fatiguing, on account of the paved roads and the beds...."

What could be more charming! A hop, skip and jump to conquer the capital, good beds every night, and paved roads all the way to Paris. Worthy Madame Bouverot!

And next came this heroic outburst, this noble transport, a sure sign of victory:

"How we shall make them dance, those scoundrels of *sans-culottes*," wrote a general officer in the corps commanded by M. le Prince de Condé. "A few days more, and we shall have fine times. We have made a few attempts which have not proved successful; but the Patriots are cowards at heart, and when England, Spain, Russia, the Emperor and Naples come to our assistance, we shall see."

I thought it would be wiser not to let the Queen know of this proof of knightly determination.... The paladins of old were not used to wait until they were five to one before descending into the lists.

"I am longing," exclaimed another emigrant, in a letter addressed to M. de Belabre, "I am longing to go and fatten myself at the cost of Messieurs the Jacobins, to whom I will show no mercy.... I mean to ruin them."

This gentleman knew his French history: he remembered the exploits of the early nobles.

"My love," wrote a lady of very amorous reputation to M. le Marquis de Gibert, "why are you not more severe with the Patriots when you catch them? At Brussels, for instance, they were undressed and left naked in the streets."

Ladies invent odd punishments, thought I, as I put this letter aside, not thinking it necessary to forward it to the Queen. And for three days I went through the papers which had accumulated on M. le Comte d'Artois' desk, without finding six lines prompted by a sincere devotion for the unfortunate prisoners in the Temple. Nothing but details of personal interest, requests for money or advancement; boastings and empty words, threats unattended by results. At last, on the

morning of the fourth day of my researches, I came across a letter addressed by the Baron de Liesingen to the Comte de Hautefort, in which I read:

"I have an idea. Would it be possible, I wonder, to send word to the Queen never to ask leave to walk alone on the towers of the Temple.... Some infernal scoundrels of the Paris police might throw her down, and would declare that she flung herself off in suicide."

Here at last was a piece of Royalist solicitude, but I refrained from communicating it to the illustrious person who had inspired it: it would have been such a melancholy proof of the intelligence of the noble supporters of the Throne! After proposing this luminous means of saving the Queen from a great danger, the Baron de Liesingen added, as a proof of the risk Her Majesty ran in walking on the towers of the Temple:

"At the Bastille, the jailers not only suggested but urged that I should walk out upon the platform; they would have ascribed to me a violent death perpetrated upon myself.

"I beg you to receive this memorial favourably, as serving the proofs of my nobility."

Probably at the time when M. de Liesingen was confined in the Bastille, some person of power at Court had become alarmed at the development of such vast genius, and not contented with keeping him behind bolts and bars, proposed purely and simply to get rid of him by having him hurled from the platform of the Bastille. But the Baron's prudence was too great for this plot to succeed.

Scandal took up a vast amount of space in the dispatches which I was sorting out. M. le Comte d'Artois little imagined that, by neglecting to hand to his officers the letters which had arrived from England and all parts of Germany addressed to his care, he had brought together a most complete chronicle of scandal. I told him of it one evening, and His Royal Highness, who always loved to laugh at the expense of sinners, especially sinners of the gentle sex, ordered me to make a collection of the more spicy letters which I should come across.

"It is too late now," said the Prince, laughing, "to hand



them to their owners. The involuntary delay in delivering them would bē for these gallant gentlemen a source of uneasiness and distress which it is my duty to spare them, when hostilities are on the point of commencing. We must be more punctual in future. Meantime let us have a good laugh over the little epistolary secrets which we have so innocently discovered. If by chance you should come across anything of serious importance, you must tell me, Léonard, and I will devise a means of sending the letters to the interested persons."

"I will obey your commands, Monseigneur."

The first gem of my collection was an extract from a letter written from Stenay by Madame la Marquise Dudreneuc to her husband :

"Madame d'Ambert has just had a very unpleasant experience. She had a footman who did her hair, a fine-looking man, and a '*grand rable*' (*Madame Dudreneuc employed the real phrases of one who knew what she was talking of*). The commissioners of the Convention had him arrested, ordered him fifty blows of the stick and turned him out... Madame d'Ambert is doing all she can to get him back... Terrible things came out..."

When he read this passage, M. le Comte d'Artois said, with a laugh: "Those ladies have taken their habits with them."

This was very well for a conjugal letter. A trifle of scandal helps to fill the pages that might otherwise seem too long. But love has quite a different style, egad! Listen to this letter addressed to M. le Baron de Flachlanden:

"If I could only see your writing, it would console me, my love... How long you have been away from me! Shall I ever see you again? When I read your letters, my blood flows more quickly... how will it be when I press you to my heart? I should die in your arms, my dear beloved. Quick, and call me to them... Alas, meantime, what cruel days I spend, and what still more cruel nights..."

I learnt next year that the Baron de Flachlanden's fond correspondent at last found a means of rejoining him, so that her blood might be made to flow more quickly than through a rare and uncertain correspondence. A year later, and the noble race of the Lords of Flachlanden was enriched with a fresh

scion, whose titles might well be contested one of these days.

Madame Janet, the mistress of the Comte de Weissemwolff, limited her love to time and place, as became a good Royalist and a better logician: she contented herself with the period of winter-quarters:

"How unhappy I should be," she wrote to her lover, "if there were no winter-quarters! I will go wherever they may be, so long as I can have my Wolffy! How I love you, dear heart. I embrace you: adieu, and adieu again.... I send you a sweet kiss."

I am happy to be able to say for the satisfaction of sensitive souls that the winter-quarters to which the Royal army retired at the end of 1792 were long and undisturbed.

M. le Baron de Vincy, aide-de-camp to the Comte de Damas-Crux, received from an affectionate friend the proofs of the tenderest solicitude:

"You tell me, my adored friend, that you are suffering from piles. I am cruelly distressed to hear it. Could you not have some leeches applied.... by an Aristocrat, of course.... I have sufficient confidence in your heart and your delicacy to hope that you will always love me.... I go into an ecstasy, my love, my all, when I think of you.... My husband embraces you and loves you with all his heart.... Your last letter was for me alone, my dear one. Ah, how kind it was! I love you, my own one.... I love you."

I never learnt whether M. le Baron de Vincy found an Aristocratic apothecary to give him his leeches, nor whether he was able, when he rejoined his fond mistress, to make due acknowledgment of the love which her husband bore with all his heart to this friend of the family.

M. le Chevalier de Frole had a mistress who had resolved to employ the most extraordinary expedients to correspond with him:

"I will write to you by every means I can command," said she. "If there are no others, I will send you a letter by the Bishop of Verdun \*.... How long your absence seems! I feel

\* Verdun had been taken by the Prussians, who established their head-quarters there.

more than ever how much I love you. See to your health, my loved one: on it depends the happiness of my life.... Your Joséphine."

Mademoiselle Joséphine's love seemed to me to be somewhat material, considering that she proposed to conduct her correspondence through the intermediary of a bishop.... But there are ways of arranging things with Heaven....

"To my mind, Léonard," said M. le Comte d'Artois, after rapidly glancing over the collection he had ordered me to make for him, "this is not at all amusing. French love-making has become feeble since the Revolution. All this will not compare with the intrigues of our good old times. I would not give a hair of my head to possess all these languishing correspondents."

"It seems to me, however, Monseigneur, that some of them coo to pretty good purpose."

"I don't say not; but they all go so straight to the point. All those women love without intelligence; and sentiment alone offers so few resources.... It is so difficult to digest.... Ah, give me our *petites maisons!*"

"I understand Your Royal Highness.... a grain of impropriety stimulates the appetite of the heart, just as condiments stimulate the appetite of the stomach."

"The heart.... Do you still believe in the heart, Léonard? Ha, ha, ha! the heart!"

"It is true, Monseigneur, that a Patriotic writer has written somewhere, 'The heart is but a word, a syllable used to fill up with in love-songs and....'"

"Well, why do you stop?"

"Because the Patriotic writer added, 'And in the speeches of the Crown.'"

"Egad, he was right for once in his life, that *sans-culotte*.... Only one might also add, 'And in the speeches from the tribune....'"

At this moment Monsieur, leaning on the arm of the Comte d'Avaray, \* entered his brother's room, in order to communicate

\* Antoine Louis Frédéric Bésiade, Comte d'Avaray, 1757—1810, assisted the Comte de Provence, afterwards Louis XVIII., to escape from France in 1791. He was the King's favourite and faithful friend during his exile, and was appointed his principal agent. He died in Madeira, where he had gone in search of health.

to him the contents of a series of instructions which it was considered advisable to send to the Comte de Moustier, the French Ambassador in Prussia. I rose to go.

"Stay, Léonard," said Monsieur; "the despatch which will be read out to my brother contains some facts which it is well that you should know of, if you still have means of corresponding with the Queen."

These instructions, which received the signatures of Louis Stanislas Xavier and Charles Philippe, were intended to place the sovereign authority in the hands of Monsieur, at a time when the Princes were flattering themselves that they were about to re-enter France. But either the Powers refused to recognize this authority, preferring to earn the King's gratitude in their own way, or else His Majesty had himself in writing protested to the foreign cabinets against the Prince his brother's well-known plans of domination: certain it is that M. le Comte de Moustier encountered many more objections than he had anticipated, and that the regency of Louis Stanislas Xavier of France remained in litigation until the death of Louis XVII.

One thing besides must be confessed, which is that the Princes' army itself did not greatly favour the regency of Monsieur, whom it hardly ever saw.

Of this I have evidence above suspicion, in the shape of a letter from Madame de Balbi:

"I have heard of the Prince of Waldeck's death," she wrote to the Highness whose favourite (*ad honores*) she was; "it has distressed me greatly.... They tell me, dear brother, that you have not been to the French camp.... go and see them more frequently."

But Louis Stanislas Xavier of France did not follow this advice.

## CHAPTER XV

The Court of the Princes at Verdun—Neglected archives—A correspondence full of despair—A circular of Calonne's annotated in red ink by Latour d'Auvergne—A relation of Chevert's—A Royalist proclamation to the French people—Saint-Priest—Monsieur's opinion on the ex-minister's manifesto.

THE fortresses of Longwi and Verdun yielded to the Prussians; but Lille and Thionville, though almost reduced to ashes, held out. Old French Patriots still remember ballads which celebrate the devotion of these two towns... It would not be impossible to find them still, smoke-stained and falling to shreds, posted up in the cottage of some old volunteer of 1792. The Princes established their head-quarters at Verdun; Monsieur, of whom till then the army had not caught a glimpse, had himself conveyed to the captured fortress; and this became during the few days that it was held, the rendez-vous of a great number of turtle doves who up to that time had cooed for their loves from afar. For eight days the relays of every post were employed only in reuniting couples separated by the war; Verdun became another Paphos... Even Madame de Balbi herself came to preside over the court of the Regent *pendente lite*, and to make merry on his champagne for want of something better to do. M. le Comte d'Artois, employing even more pleasantly his rights as a conqueror, established for himself a little seraglio, selected from amongst the prettiest purveyors of sweets, and I believe that but few of them charged His Royal Highness dear for their sugar-plums... In short, the emigrants passed at Verdun a perfectly charming fortnight; it was a *sursum corda* of the merriest... nothing was talked of in the town but balls, concerts and delightful banquets; and the subsequent sighs, although they made less noise, left more lasting effects, as became apparent a few months later, from the unappeasable tears of a considerable number of the young ladies of Verdun...

But alas! this was not their only misfortune... there was seen arriving in Paris in 1793 a crowd of these poor little women, whose only betrayal of their country had consisted in that surrender which makes the victor so happy; none the less were they condemned for it by the terrible Revolutionary Tribunal; they perished, repeating softly perhaps, this line of Parny:

Non, le crime n'est pas si doux.

The Capuan delights which the emigrants tasted at Verdun were of short duration; one evening, one fatal evening, a Prussian orderly brought Monsieur certain despatches announcing that the army of the Duke of Brunswick was retreating and falling back upon Verdun.

At this sad news, beauty, sport and pleasure spread their wings and took to flight; the sound of feasting ceased within the walls of Verdun, and the Princes, with whom a disciplined fortress for head-quarters did not agree, left hastily, so hastily that Monsieur forgot that famous pocket-book, which has disclosed so many things that this Royal Highness never told. Apart from the pocket-book, which through ill-luck escaped my notice, the Princes left behind them in their several lodgings many other papers, which they instructed me to recover, and the talk of which was considerably increased during the forty-eight hours which I passed at Verdun after the departure of Their Royal Highnesses for Trèves.

You have seen that the emigrants and their correspondents flattered themselves with the idea of arriving at Paris by daily stages, "because of the roads and the lodgings"; now this was so no longer: a kind of panic seized every Royalist heart; the letters which arrived and came into my possession and which I, in accordance with my instructions, examined (invariably, through inadvertence in tearing open both envelopes at once) were full of cries of alarm.

"Each day we learn of events more and more frightful," wrote Madame de Chamisot to M. le Marquis de Thuisy. "How I pity our unhappy sovereigns! The King, so good, whose only fault has been his weakness.... But neither he nor his

august family deserve such a fate, alas! Behold them actually prisoners of war; it sends a shiver through one, and you shall see, their heads will be carried in the van of the army sent against you so soon as you take the offensive . . . ."

"What misfortunes," wrote another of love's victims to M. de Jonville, "Scarcely had you notified me that you were at Châlons, when I learnt that you were retreating! Behold Republican France; they have removed the mask; they have deposed the King; and all France rejoices.... What blind folly! May it soon cease! But meanwhile, time slips by; the sale of your property is about to take place: I have heard that it is fixed for the 5th or 6th of October. We must expect everything, since they are capable of everything."

The emigrants did not write to each other in any more consoling fashion: M. le Comte de Lespinasse-Langeac received from one of his friends, a colonel, this doleful message:

"I clearly perceive we shall be the victims of the greed of those in power; everything proclaims that we shall be sacrificed. Knaves and fools are at the helm: how could it be otherwise?"

Another officer wrote to the Comte Louis Lepeltier, saying: "How unhappy are we! On the one side sick Prussians, on the other penniless emigrants, hunted from every refuge!"

Madame la Comtesse de Chaugy, more despairing still, wrote to her husband:

"There is no hope now of ever re-entering our homes except on terms of the very lowest humiliation.... What a triumph for these wretched beggars! what misery . . . ."

"Alas! you are retreating, my dear boy," wrote M. de La Maisonsfort to his son; "this Dumouriez, whose mind appeared so badly organized, has succeeded in triumphing over your great generals: it is deeds that tell, and our calamities have reached a climax.... And how, without any resources, are so many gentle people, who have nothing save nobility and honour for their share, to begin the war again in the spring?.... What we need above everything, is the yellow metal, the **universal**



sinew.... Alas! I have none of it for myself, I have none of it for you; I am wretched when I think that you will die of hunger."

It will doubtless be noticed that all through these complaints, these fits of anger, or boasting, or discouragement there were evolved very few sound ideas, still fewer well-considered reasonings or sensible plans for the future. The generous character of the emigrants must however have lain hidden somewhere; for if, at the beginning of this voluntary exile, it had fear as its first and perhaps its only motive, it cannot be denied that, after 1791, it was the outcome of a noble devotion to the cause of the Throne, in the case, at least, of many of the emigrants....

Among the numerous writings which came under my notice after the departure of the Princes from Verdun, I found only one of any sense, and this, to the credit of the fair sex, was written by a woman.

The Baronne de Bois-d'Aisy wrote to her husband, a general officer commanding the mounted Grenadiers:

"God grant the emigrants may carefully reflect that they must no longer think of revenging themselves on a country reduced to its allegiance, but rather of how best to regain the affections of the people. It is this of which we stand most in need; and if, on the contrary, we justify the hatred which we have aroused in the people, we shall never find peace and repose. We must realize that if we had not displayed so boastful a spirit, nor so often shown a desire for revenge almost as fierce as the worst outburst of the Patriots, and if the emigrants in Germany had behaved in a wiser and nobler fashion, they would have played a more honourable, a more important part in the present war."

This letter contained a great and useful truth which, unfortunately, had been too often overlooked on the banks of the Rhine; the licentious life of Coblenz, the openly displayed prostitution of our great ladies; the gambling-hells established by the emigrants in every corner of the town; the wretched quarrels so common among them for the titles, honours and privileges which they all coveted, had brought the emigration into disrepute at the very moment when it was most necessary



that it should gain respect by creating a lofty idea of its mission.... Thence the eager desire of the peaceable Germans to drive back from their towns a nobility who were mere braggarts in matters of warfare, although audacious enough in those of gallantry, who wearied their ears with their schemes of revenge upon "those beggarly Patriots," and who really occupied themselves to no purpose save to disturb the repose of the happy homes of Germany.

In collecting the papers forgotten at Verdun, there came into my hands a document, with notes in red ink, expressing opinions entirely opposed to those which inspired the emigration.

From it you will learn what it was that chiefly misled the ardour, folly, madness or ignorance of the majority of the noblemen who had drawn their swords in support of the Throne: it was the superficial intellect of a Calonne, it was the eloquent sophistry of his proclamations, based on errors and prejudices which he strove to elevate to the rank of principles. Listen to this rhetorician's argumentations in a letter addressed to the emigrant nobility at the beginning of the campaign of 1792... And the better to judge of its lofty moral tendency, let us at the outset see how at that time he judged those French upstarts who now (1811) fill the whole world with the fame of their military exploits:

"Yes, this blind people, this insane multitude," said the ex-minister, "will find in you its natural defenders. The French will see that this art of war, the shield of empires, *is only possessed by the nobility*; that rank has been purchased by merit, and titles by blood; that this chimerical equality, with which they have been cozened, merely takes something from them, never gives them anything; that they have accomplished nothing in abolishing the nobility, beyond depriving the Monarchy of its lustre; that this ridiculous issue of epaulets has filled the country with mock heroes, just as that of paper money has flooded it with mock wealth."

Before this letter had reached its destination, the "mock heroes" had burnt Lille and Thionville rather than surrender them, and the "shield of empires" was fleeing as fast as its legs could carry it, towards the Rhine. Let us quote further:

" You will tell the jealous middle classes that in the destruction of the nobility there perishes *the only inducement to exertion, the only reward for merit*, the only condition of affairs which mitigates poverty, and gives distinction and grace to riches. You will easily convince these vain and suspicious minds that their dignity would continually be more shocked by the numerous class which equality had raised to their level than gratified by the comparatively small number of those whom it had brought down to them. Our philosophers seek to disparage the honour of gentlemen; you will ask them if a sentiment which induces a contempt for life and fortune is itself a contemptible sentiment." \*

Let us continue, however, to set forth the maxims of this moral guide of the emigration:

" The majority of men of letters will be your deadly enemies: they wish to destroy political aristocracies, persuaded that a destructive one will always be left to them, that of the mind. They will make war upon you with sophistries, and overwhelm you with the scourge of print, the only plague which Moses omitted to inflict upon Egypt." †

M. de Calonne himself supports the truth of the note I quote at foot by this passage in his circular:

" Do not be deceived. There indeed exists a terrible struggle between the printing-press and the cannon (*the ex-minister here means, between intelligence which reasons, and force which compels*): what will be the result for the unhappy human race? Did Providence, which introduced both these inventions together, at the same stage in the everlasting progress of time and circumstances, intend to suit the remedy to the disease? Did it not then foresee that that which ought to enlighten man would

\* Note.—Replying to this question by another, sensible men will ask M. de Calonne if such a sentiment is a virtue common to all the nobility, and if it is a virtue possessed by them alone. They will ask him to what extent, up to the present, nobility has become the reward for merit; if, for four or five great genuises ennobled in the course of the last three reigns, one cannot count by thousands those wretched patents of nobility, known by the name of *savonnettes de vilain*, which, far from giving distinction and grace to riches, only brought their existence into contempt by attaching thereto the forms of an empty folly.

† Note.—If men of letters knew of no better weapons than sophistries, rulers of nations would never have regarded the press as a scourge....

mislead him? that that which ought to protect him would oppress him? and that it was thus adding two cataracts the more to the deluge of evils beneath which the earth is submerged?" \*

I have shown this document to a French expert residing at St. Petersburg, and he assured me that the notes in red ink were in the hand-writing of the famous Latour-d'Auvergne, who was killed in Bavaria during the wars of the Republic. I will not swear that the expert was correct; but the views put forward in opposition to the proclamation of M. de Calonne seem to me to agree with the opinions of the grenadier-philosopher. †

The mention of Verdun recalls the name of Chevert, § with its halo of undimmed glory. Monsieur, showing enlightened appreciation of that fine character, paid a visit to the booth in which the illustrious defender of Prague had first seen the light.... Among the abandoned correspondence I found the following:

"My Prince,

"Born of honest parents, François Chevert, my kinsman, won, through his military talents, the rank of lieutenant-general and the titles of Commander and Grand-Cross of the Order of St. Louis, Knight of the White Eagle of Poland, \*\* and Governor of Givet and Charlemont. The loss of this distinguished man, on the 24th of January, 1769, deprived me of a protection

\* Note.—Providence, which does not wish brute force to triumph here below, and which sent men civilization to save them from that calamity, Providence has bestowed upon the press the virtue attributed to Achilles' spear: it heals the wounds it has caused. Rarely, in the struggles between sophistry and truth, does victory fail to fall to the latter in the judgment of the masses. It is therefore only with the intention of causing oppression to triumph that artillery can be opposed to the press. For a just, wise and benevolent power makes itself respected and beloved by governing without the aid of arms.

† Théophile Malo Corret de Latour d'Auvergne was born at Carhaix in 1743, and was a bastard of the illustrious house of Latour d'Auvergne. He was one of the most intrepid soldiers in the Republican army, and distinguished himself by refusing advancement, contenting himself with the title of *le Premier grenadier de France*, officially bestowed upon him by Bonaparte, the First Consul. Shortly after, he was killed at Oberhausen (27 June, 1800), where a monument was forthwith raised to his memory, followed, forty-one years later, by another at his birthplace of Carhaix. Latour d'Auvergne was an exceedingly fine linguist, and published, in 1792, his *Nouvelles recherches sur la langue, l'origine et les antiquités des Bretons*, which was reprinted after his death under the title of *Origines Gauloises*.

§ François de Chevert, 1695—1769, a brave French general, was born at Verdun. He held out at Prague, in 1742, for 18 days with a garrison of 1800 men against the whole strength of the Austrian army.

\*\* An order established by Augustus II. in 1705. It has since been merged into one of the Russian Imperial Orders.

which would have contributed to my happiness and advancement, but which I had not then been able to enjoy, being only eleven years of age. My conduct up to the year 1779 was such as to obtain for me an office as receiver of His Majesty's taxes at Verdun, and this post led me in the execution of my duties to the frontier in 1791, when activities were commencing at the barriers.

"When the troops of H. M. the King of Prussia passed the frontier, I was not spared. They robbed me of six quarters of rye and three quarters of wheat, and this loss amounts to 100 livres . . . . H. H. the Prince of Hohenlohe, when this fact was brought before him, seemed much touched at the accident; but the value of the grain was not restored to me. I make so bold as to recommend this little matter to Your Royal Highness's care . . . .

*"Signed: TRAILIN."*

Chevert's name invoked for the sake of a hundred francs! All his dignities displayed on paper by a kinsman for a hundred francs! . . . . That does not sound well . . . .

I also found among the archives forgotten at Verdun an address to the French People, annotated in full detail, and carefully corrected, which was headed, "Fear God, and love your King and your Country. France shall be saved." I deciphered this document with some difficulty, and succeeded in reading as follows:

"Open your eyes, People of France, and see how you are being deceived by those perfidious Societies who make use of every possible means to lead you astray. See how they stir up trouble in every quarter of the Kingdom, over which they tyrannize in the name of clubs. Their branches extend to the furthest villages. In every district these clubs exercise a despotic sway; they dispose of every administration by electing their members to it, and enforcing their laws. Is it not they who are responsible for the burning and pillaging of the châteaus? Is it not they who hunt down like wild beasts the nobles and the unhappy clergy who have remained true to their principles, to the King, and to God? Is it not through their tyrannical clamouring, through their reiterated threats, that the greater

part of the nobility and of the rich landlords have been compelled, in order to escape the assassin's dagger, to seek a refuge beyond the limits of the Kingdom? Is it not from their Assembly, when they prescribed the most derisive and impolitic of oaths, that the apple of discord was thrown which divided the Church and the Army? Is it not they who have sown the seeds of insubordination among the troops, inciting the soldiers against their officers, and forcing the latter brave men to leave their regiments after their hair had whitened in the service of their country, which they had defended with so much honour?

"Those, People of France, are the benefits which you have received at the hands of those monstrous corporations, the greater part of whose members have no property of their own and daily incite against those who have. They ask for a republic so that they may reign still more despotically over you when they have subjugated every authority and ravaged all the property that gives the rich man an influence over the poor and binds the latter to the former by the bond of gratitude for benefits received."

This document gave a picture somewhat exaggerated, perhaps, but none the less true, of the interior of France and the agitation produced by the popular societies.... These societies, which overran the whole Kingdom, intoxicated the people with the goblet of an illusory sovereignty: the good people thought itself king, in the manner of the ancient masters of the world, of those Romans whom revolutionary France took for its model.... It was not easy to remove from its lips this delectable beverage before it had discovered the deception which lay at the bottom of the cup.... It discovered that later on.

I unearthed another minute for a proclamation, enclosed in a letter addressed to Monsieur and signed Saint-Priest.\* In this manifesto the ex-minister adopted a sort of familiar tone in order to be better understood of the multitude. You will see that he may have succeeded in being simple: he certainly did not succeed in being accurate.

\* François Emmanuel Guignard, Comte de Saint-Priest, 1735—1821, served as Ambassador to Portugal and Turkey, and was appointed Minister of the Interior in 1789. He emigrated in the course of the subsequent year, wandered round the Courts of Europe soliciting assistance for the Bourbons, and returned with them to France in 1814. He was created a Peer of France in 1815.

"Good people, I will tell you why the price of bread has gone up, and why you are threatened with having none to eat. First of all, there are so many masters that we can't hear one another speak. Next, they have divided the Kingdom into eighty-three departments, which have nothing in common, which don't correspond one with the other; so that when one has too much of a thing, it is not able to offer any of it to another which has not enough. Formerly, when the Intendant of Paris, for instance, and the Lieutenant of Police, and the Provost of the Merchants perceived that corn was getting scarce on the market, they wrote to the Minister. The Minister wrote off at once to the intendants of the provinces which were able to supply it. One wrote back, "My province could send so much without running short"; the other wrote, "So much." And if, as happened in 1788, the intendants all replied, "We have none to spare; you must not hope to get any corn from my province: I fear we shall be running short here too," then the good King, the father of all Frenchmen, wrote to all the kings his neighbours, begging them to allow him to buy corn in their States for his children, and promising them to do the same for theirs when they should run short of corn and his should have any to sell.

"That is how our good Sovereign bought sixty millions' worth, as you all know, the year before you rebelled against him. With his own hand he wrote urgent letters to the King of Naples to permit the French ships to come and fetch corn in Sicily. He wrote to the King of England, to the King of Spain. He even sent all the way to America, whence he received millions of barrels full....He is no longer the master now; he has no more intendants at his orders in the provinces. Each of the eighty-three departments does as it thinks fit. They think only of themselves, and they will suffer through it just as you do. Moreover, all our neighbours despise us now, hate us, and are preparing to make war upon us, because you are committing an offence against God and mankind by keeping the best of kings a prisoner. If the administrators of the departments should now try to come to an understanding with the King on this subject, they would no longer be able to do so....there are the administrators of the districts and the

municipals to be reckoned with; it would be a heap of ifs, buts and whys without end; and when they had agreed, which they never would do, the people themselves, who are masters too, since they all carry guns, would raise objections, without thinking that they may be in the same case some day.

"Formerly, France was one great family, governed by one father; everybody obeyed him for everybody's good. Now each man pulls his own way; and so that things may become still more muddled, our poor France is divided into eighty-three instead of thirty-three. For the provinces themselves are divided into two or three departments, which are sure to end by quarrelling with one another.

"And I tell you, my friends, I am not a clever man like Condorcet, Bailly and all the rest who pretend to be such good men of business; I am not a mathematician, nor a physician, nor a logician, nor an academician; but I have more common sense in my little finger than all those wise men put together, who only know how to write books, and who want to meddle with government, and than all that Left side of the National Assembly, which has turned out, without listening to the Right, a Constitution which nobody can make heads or tails of. Things will go from bad to worse, be sure of that, until you come to see that there is none but a good King able to make his subjects happy....And that is what I wish you may soon come to see."

The margin of the four big pages which this document covered was filled with a note, all in the handwriting of Monsieur; and of a far from approving nature.

"M. de Saint-Priest," said His Royal Highness, "proposes to talk to the French people as one talks to children, and this no longer suits the times: the people have shown all too well, egad, that they have attained their majority. Moreover, in using the language suited to little boys, M. de Saint-Priest should at least have used the arguments of an adult, and that is what he has not done. One should be careful how one speaks to the French Nation of what happened with the corn-supply before the Revolution: that is not quite the finest side of the old system of things, and people still remember that the

King our grandfather drove a trade in corn of a more or less scandalous character. The revolts which constantly recurred in France during the reign of the King our brother because of the monopolists who, unknown to His Majesty, continued the traffic in the King's wheat are still a matter of common notoriety: let us not rake up these old dung-hills, which can still emit so foul an odour.

"And then, when you want to persuade people, you must let your statements be at least probable. Every school-boy knows that when a province has more corn than it requires for its own consumption it passes it on quite naturally to the one which is short of it without any necessity for interference on the part of the King, or his ministers, or his intendants. A greater master than they, self-interest, dictates the transaction, since it is quite simple to expect to sell one's corn at a good price and safely to a country which stands in dread of a famine.

"When he speaks of the applications made abroad in order to obtain corn, because of the insufficiency in France, M. de Saint-Priest proves himself a bad logician. He should have remembered that in the very worst years the harvests in France were always sufficient for her needs; and that if the country was reduced to solicit permission to purchase corn abroad, this was only because the operations indulged in by the principal speculators had exceeded lawful limits .... No, no, Monsieur de Saint-Priest, don't say again that the King of France had to ask for assistance of corn in England: people would take the great liberty of laughing in your face ....

"As to the author's criticism on the division of the territory into departments and the want of a mutual understanding which he supposes to exist between them, nothing is less well founded, either in principle or in fact. Every Frenchman can recall that medley of customs and observations and jurisdictions which formerly prevailed throughout the Kingdom: the persistent remnants of the feudal system, which made each province a separate state, in which it was not only impossible to make its interests harmonize with those of the neighbouring provinces, but in which a number of authorities, seigneurial, ecclesiastic and municipal, kept up a perpetual conflict. The one useful and indispensable thing brought about by the French Revolution

is the uniform division of the territory, and the suppression of all those local systems of jurisprudence which constantly trammeled the action of the Monarchy.

"We think, therefore," resumed the Prince, "that the Comte de Saint-Priest's composition would be a dangerous thing to make use of, both on account of its tissue of erroneous principles and the criticism which it would be sure to provoke."

## C H A P T E R XVI

My farewell audience of Monsieur—And of M. le Comte d'Artois—News of the death of the Vicomte de Mirabeau—The Comte d'Artois' reflections—Louis XVI.'s hair-dressing edict—The King as inspector of ladies' costume—Hair-dressing in numerical order—The Princes' carriages seized for debt—The distress of the emigrants—Re-appearance of Madame Du Barry.

I LEFT Verdun in order to rejoin the Princes at Trèves, carrying with me the papers which they had forgotten in departing, with the exception of the unfortunate private pocket-book of H.R.H. Monsieur, in which, let me say in passing, the Jacobin party has pretended to have found a number of things which were not there: love-letters among others, which were formulated according to each one's individual fancy. I think I am right in presuming that the only correspondence of this kind which the too famous portfolio can have contained came from Madame de Balbi; and I am inclined to doubt whether love, properly so-called, played any great part in it. The favourite realized the futility of lighting a fire upon the icy plains of Lapland, and she knew how to make better use of her fuel.

After handing to the King's brothers the papers which I had collected at Verdun, and giving M. le Comte d'Artois the key to the spoils of his own archives, I declared my intention of returning to England in order to continue to carry out the Queen's instructions.

"What! the Queen's instructions?" repeated M. le Comte de Provence, somewhat brusquely. "And how can you receive her instructions, now that her Majesty is confined in the Temple?"

"Mon Prince, since the occurrences of the 10th of August I have never ceased to receive the Queen's instructions."

"That seems very extraordinary," rejoined Monsieur, with evident ill-humour; adding, in coaxing tones, "But I think,

Monsieur Léonard, you ought to communicate to me the nature of the intelligence which you have kept up with the Crown."

"I meddle, Monseigneur, neither with war nor politics. True, what the Queen deigns to ask of me has nothing to do with the ordinary attributes of an humble hair-dresser; but as those who second me risk their lives at every moment, I could not, without sacrificing them, extend my relations. Your Royal Highness will understand that so dangerous a secret must not leave my breast."

"Very well, Léonard, very well," replied Monsieur, in a tone of forced composure, "I will not ask you for a confidence which you cannot give.... And when do you return to London?"

"So soon as I have received Your Royal Highness's orders and those of M. le Comte d'Artois."

"I shall devote to-morrow to preparing mine. I shall be glad when you are over there. Our agents in London are very inactive: they go about drinking tea, making love to the English ladies, visiting the assaults-at-arms of the Chevalier de Saint-Georges,\* or listening to strains of the famous Viotti,† and they allow the Cabinet of St. James to fall asleep over our representations.... You shall be our emissary to these gentry, you must rouse them for us.... Do you understand me, Léonard?"

"Perfectly, Monseigneur."

"Go and see M. le Comte d'Artois, who will give you his instructions also.... Have you a good memory?"

"Certainly, mon Prince."

"That is fortunate, for d'Artois never writes a line. It takes up too much time, he says, and yet God knows that he gene-

\* This celebrity was a man of colour, born in Guadeloupe in 1745, of the commerce between a wealthy planter and a negress. His father brought him to France as a boy, and put him into the Musketeers. He was subsequently appointed Captain of the Guards to the Duc de Chartres, father to Philippe Egalité, and became the lover of the Duchess. His training at the Palais-Royal was such as to incline him towards the Revolution, and after his stay in England, during which he gave the fencing displays here referred to, he joined the army of Dumouriez, became in the natural course of revolutionary events "suspect," and was arrested in 1794. The 9 Thermidor restored him to liberty. He died in 1801. He would appear to have possessed an agreeable person, and to have excelled in the arts of fencing, music and love.

+ Giambattista Viotti, an important Italian violinist. Louis XVIII. appointed him to the management of the Opera in 1818, but the labour surpassed his endurance, and he died in 1824 at the age of sixty-nine.

rally does not know what to do with his, unless it be the time between night and morning . . . ."

There was a touch of ill-humour in this remark of the Prince's, although he laughed as he uttered it. I suspected the reason for this little display of discontent. Charles Philippe of France was not very willing to recognize the regency *de facto* which his august brother had assumed until the time when he would be able to exercise it *de jure*. It is always that plaguey power which comes between Princely friendships. I carefully kept to myself Monsieur's not very brotherly outburst, and went to M. le Comte d'Artois to ask his orders.

I found with His Royal Highness an officer of the army commanded by M. le Prince de Condé at Fribourg. He had just brought the Prince the news of the death of the Vicomte de Mirabeau, so well-known at that time by the name of Mirabeau-Tonneau.\* The officer was about to commence a recital of the funeral honours shown to that general, when His Royal Highness interrupted him with a somewhat burlesque reflection, exclaiming:

"That honest Mirabeau, his belly is bound to have caused his death. On the battle-field, it was too big long to escape the enemy's bullets; and outside the lists of war, it was too greedy to escape an indigestion. Since you tell me that the viscount died in his bed, I am sure he must have succumbed to the consequences of a great dinner, as he would otherwise have succumbed to the consequences of a great battle. Go on."

A little disconcerted by this digression, the soldier resumed as best he could his pathetic narrative. "M. de Mirabeau," he continued, "expired on the 15th of September, at three o'clock in the afternoon. I had just arrived at Fribourg, and my first care was to go and shed a tear by the hero's side, as he lay in state. He wore his Hussar's uniform; his features were unaltered; one would have thought he slept. Your Royal Highness cannot conceive," said the officer, wiping away a tear, "how this sight threw me beside myself. I raged at the idea of the joy which this loss will cause our enemies; my blood boiled in

\* He was the younger brother of the great Mirabeau, "Mirabeau-Tonnerre," and owed his own nickname of "Mirabeau-Tonneau" to his fatness, which was excessive. He emigrated with the Court, and died at Fribourg somewhat about this time.

my veins; had I been called upon to fight at that moment, I should have been doubly brave. On the morning of the 16th, H.S.H. the Prince de Condé reached Fribourg with a large number of general officers and five officers from each company in the evening the body was carried to the cemetery outside the town, surrounded by four to five hundred French officers, with the Princes of Condé and Esterhazy\* at their head.

"The Austrians rendered to the deceased the honours due to a general officer: a batallion of infantry, two flags; volleys of musketry and artillery were fired over his grave. The Mirabeau Legion demanded the heart of its leader; it has been enclosed in a little case of lead, which will be hung to the white flag of the regiment.

"The widow of the illustrious viscount," continued the reciter, "will shortly arrive at your Royal Highness's head-quarters, in order to beg for her little son the command and ownership of the regiment raised by his late father."

"Even if she were pretty, and she is not," interrupted M. le Comte d'Artois, "Madame la Vicomtesse de Mirabeau should not receive my consent to so ridiculous an appointment. To give colonels' brevets to sucking-babes was one of those pretty things which were possible at Versailles twenty years ago; but in the army, and when it is a question of reconquering a throne, you must have moustachios before you can receive a command."

"In that case, mon Prince, it is to be feared that the Mirabeau Legion will be disbanded; for all the officers are devoted to young Mirabeau."

"Monsieur, if they choose to dismiss, the King will have no reason to regret the loss of such servants . . . ."

The officer, who had doubtless been charged to prepare the way at the Princes' head-quarters, dared not reply. He bowed and went out.

"Well, my dear Léonard, in spite of all the pathos that that worthy officer has thrown into his recital, he has not succeeded in touching me. No doubt in the Vicomte de Mirabeau we lose a brave and devoted general; but his monstrous corpulence

\* The House of Esterhazy was promoted to the dignity of a State in the Holy Roman Empire in 1804, just before that Empire ceased to exist.

is always present before my eyes. I see him in his light uniform of Hussars, stretched on his death-bed . . . and do you know the idea which gets into my head when I think of it?"

"If Your Royal Highness would deign to tell it me . . ."

"Yes, but in a whisper . . . All the time the officer was talking to me, I was thinking of the funeral obsequies of the Shrove-tide ox!"

The precision of the comparison caused me to burst into laughter, for which I made my best excuses to the Prince.

"Oh, laugh, Léonard; there is no harm in laughing: it is so much gained over our most redoubtable enemy, weariness . . . As for me, I am eaten up with weariness, and if it lasts long, I believe on my honour I shall end by joining that poor Vicomte de Mirabeau . . . What the devil is there for me to do here? The emigrants are all ruined: there is no play possible; the lady emigrants are growing old, and I am tired of my studies in ancient history; the German women are sentimental and cold; and as to the German Princes, you can't go hunting with them for an hour without fearing to step out of their states. Ah, my sweet Versailles, my charming Paris, where are you? Come, Léonard, tell me a story of our good days to enliven me a little . . . Rummage once more in your powder-bag and bring out an anecdote. Tell me of your career as a hero, when you were a duke, a count, a marquis, a president . . . by proxy."

"Gladly, mon Prince. I remember a rather curious chapter in my history which took place in the year when Your Royal Highness lay before Gibraltar." \*

"Yes, yes, when I made such fine play with . . . kitchen batteries."

"As Your Royal Highness wittily wrote to the Queen . . . Well, at that time I was literally overwhelmed under a burden of which one rarely complains: the burden of my reputation. It was useless even to attempt to satisfy the thousand demands made upon me on every side. I had as many as ten aides-de-camp who set out every morning from my house in the Chaussée-d'Antin and spread themselves out over every quarter

\* At the siege of 1782. It was on the occasion of this siege that d'Arçon's floating batteries were brought into play, to no purpose; and it is doubtless with reference to these batteries that the Comte d'Artois makes the little play upon words that follows.

of Paris, in order to prepare the heads to which I was to give the finishing touches. However, it was always necessary that I should put in an appearance in person, and the work became beyond my powers."

"Especially when the accessory duties tended to put out your hand a little at the end of the day."

"Your Royal Highness always jests with a charming grace.... I raised my prices, but to no avail: the ladies' eagerness in no way relented.... Your Royal Highness will perhaps refuse to believe that I never had so many clients as on the day when I determined not to dress a head for less than twenty-five louis...."

"I am not surprised at it: ladies never bargain with their lovers nor with their caprices."

"One day I said to the Queen, after arriving a few minutes late at her toilet, 'Ah, why cannot I petition the King to give an order that the ladies of the Court are henceforth only to have their hair dressed by me upon an edict of His Majesty?'

"'You may think you are jesting,' replied Her Majesty, 'but I would it were so, especially when we are away from town and all the Court ladies stay at the Château.'

"A few days later the Queen gave a ball at Marly. Your Royal Highness knows how small the apartments are in that little palace, the fruit of a whim of Louis XIV.: it is really not much more than a summer-house, and the most highly titled ladies were lodged like their lady's maids at Versailles. So much so, that I told the Queen it would be impossible, seeing the number of heads that would have to pass through my hands, for me to think of running up and down the stairs and corridors in order to dress the hair of all those ladies in their tiny bed-rooms.

"'It is well you remind me,' replied Her Majesty, laughing; 'this is the time to have an edict commanding all the ladies to proceed to a large room on the ground-floor and there to wait their turns to have their hair done in a neighbouring apartment.... I will go straight to the King, and I promise you, Léonard, you shall have your edict.'

"The Queen explained almost seriously to the King the anxious position in which I found myself placed, and proposed

that His Majesty should interpose his authority in this difficulty.

"Not by means of an order, at least," replied the King gaily; "this is quite simply a matter for a commissary of police, and I undertake to play the part...."

"What, Your Majesty would condescend...."

"Zounds, Madame, it is not for you to protest: was it not you who obliged me to issue counterfoils for your theatre at the Petit-Trianon, so that there might be a little order in the house? My duties to-day will be much more elevated.... Let me know when the time comes.... you shall see.... you shall see...."

And really, at six o'clock in the evening, all the ladies staying at the Château were commanded to assemble in one of the rooms downstairs, dressed in their dressing-gowns, and carrying flowers, feathers, diamonds and so forth, in order to have their hair dressed under His Majesty's inspection. To come down in their dressing-gowns was easily said; but it was an extremely delicate condition to have to put into practice. The presence of the dressing-gown presupposes the absence of the corset; and out of every twenty aspirants, there were at least ten who were not prepared to present their unsupported charms to the "inspection" of the King, notwithstanding that His Majesty was near-sighted.

Nevertheless, the number of my clients was large enough to make a Royal police absolutely essential. The ladies assembled in the waiting-room, notwithstanding the presence of their Sovereign, put forward claims of precedence which became more and more noisy, and which threatened to become violent. His Majesty shouted for silence like an usher in the law-courts, but he soon perceived that the force of nature was stronger than the respect for his person, and he would have certainly shouted himself hoarse, had he not devised another means of keeping order.

"Footmen!" cried Louis XVI., "bring a small desk, ink, a pen and a packet of cards." His Majesty was obeyed forthwith.

"Now," resumed the King, "I am going to give each of you a number.... Come, ladies, walk up: the oldest first...."

"Not a lady stirred."

"Ah, that's true," said the King, laughing heartily, "what a

funny idea of mine. Come as you please then, but one after the other, and without confusion . . . .

"When the inspection was finished, the King, greatly amused with his duties as commissary of police, took up his stand at the door leading from the waiting-room into the smaller room where I was to do their hair, called for number one, and so on for all the series. The good Prince watched me at work; and so soon as a head was finished, and its owner rose to go out by a sidedoor, His Majesty clapped his hands and called the next number. In this way the fatigue of my sitting was greatly diminished, and the King took more pleasure in this preamble to the ball than in the ball itself."

As I finished telling this little anecdote, a messenger was announced from Prince Hohenlohe. That general sent word to His Royal Highness that he would be obliged to fall back upon Alsace in consequence of the retreat of the Duke of Brunswick.

"This news," interrupted M. le Comte d'Artois, "is very different from what I was told a few days ago by M. le Cardinal de Rohan. His Eminence declared that the armies of Luckner and Dumouriez had assembled before the Prussians, who had let them do as they pleased; but that subsequently there had been a great battle, which cost the Patriots seventeen thousand men . . . . I see that M. le Cardinal wished to gild the pill for me . . . ."

M. le Comte d'Artois next gave me his orders for England in his usual fashion, that is to say without writing a word down, and I had to cover the tablets of my memory with an infinity of details, which I was well decided to put down on paper so soon as I had left the Prince. "As to your commission to inform the Queen of our financial situation," added the Prince, drawing from his pocket a note which he had received that morning from the Marquis de Vienne, "you can show this to Her Majesty, my dear Léonard, in confirmation of your report to her . . . . Read it, read it," and I read:

"Three of Monsieur's carriages, and nine others belonging to French noblemen, although deposited in a place of safety, have just been discovered and seized by one Michael Horn, of Andernach, for the sum of 1104 livres owing to him by the

Princes. A further seizure has been made by a woman named Scherds Bateliva, for 1500 livres due to her and the same to her son."

"We did invent a means," resumed the Prince, "which, with the aid of the engraver's art, was of some use to us. But it did not last long: the people of Trèves saw through the secret.... See here, Léonard; you had better take this report too, it reached me to-day:

"We were never so unfortunate as at present. Assignats given in payment or discounted by messieurs the emigrants are continually being sent back from Paris, with reports declaring them false. They say there are four millions' worth of them. Your Royal Highness knows how selfish the people of Trèves are; you may imagine their outcry, and it is we who are the victims.'

"You can understand, my dear Léonard," resumed the Prince, "that to be called pickpockets is not pleasant for Princes of the Blood; the position ceases to be endurable.... Should there really be any means of helping us, it is high time to do so now."

"The means are there, Monseigneur.... and I have an appointment at Dover with some-one well-known to Your Royal Highness, who is assisting us greatly...."

"Oh, oh! and the name?"

"I may not tell yet; but it is quite certain, and the assistance will be one of two or three millions."

"Then it's a providence...."

"That has never been severe to living man."

"It must be a woman of the Court.... Go, and keep courage; for we are reduced to selling our breeches.... Don't think I am joking. See here, Léonard, read this letter written to M. de Wicom, one of my staff-officers, by his friend, Madame Le Bouhour."

I took the letter, and thought I was the dupe of an illusion when I had read it. It ran thus:

"I have sold the clothes of which you spoke, and also your breeches: I have made every effort to sell them as dear as

possible; I assure you I have had a deal of trouble, for I had them taken to every house.... At last I sold them to M. Cul for one louis. As to your waistcoat and your nankeen breeches, I could get nothing for them.... What wretchedness, my heart!" \*

I took my final leave of the Princes on the 12th of October 1792, and on the 16th of the same month I stood on the jetty at Dover, awaiting the arrival of the packet from Calais. At five o'clock in the evening, it being neap-tide, the passengers who had come over in that ship had to be carried on shore on the backs of sailors. With my spy-glass in my hand, I endeavoured to distinguish the features of the travellers who were being thus disembarked. Among others, one lady seemed to be a rather heavy burden for the sailor who carried her. She cared so little for her position on the Englishman's shoulders, that she was quite indifferent to an entire exhibition of her leg .... a very remarkable leg, on my word!... "Oh, oh!" said I to myself, after a careful scrutiny, "I seem to know that leg...." Six minutes later I was assured that this piece of evidence had not deceived me.... I received in my arms Madame la Comtesse Du Barry, as she leapt from the back of her carrier.

\* The original publishers here append a note to say that this letter was kept by Léonard and shown to them in 1816, and that they copied it word for word.

## C H A P T E R XVII

The handsome masquerader—Explanations—Projects—The Royalist colony—British policy—A morning visit—Blache the Republican—A scene at William's door—The little shoe-black.

MADAME Du Barry was as fresh and pretty as ever, notwithstanding that she had passed her fortieth year. She greeted me most graciously, and even very notably squeezed my hand: there was a memory of Luciennes in that pressure.

"We are old friends, Léonard," said the countess, leaning on my arm as I led her to the inn kept by the Sieur Mariet, a Frenchman who had been established at Dover for some years.

"You speak of old friends, madame; in truth, it is difficult to believe, when one looks at you, that you can have any of that sort."

"True, I have some young ones too;" and so saying, Madame Du Barry turned towards a tall young lady's maid walking by her side.

Following her glance, I was struck with extreme surprise, so great was the resemblance between this young woman and the Duc d'Aiguillon.

"Oho!" thought I, "is this the fruit of the love which obtained for the duke the title of Premier? . . . Yet I never heard that the countess . . . What am I thinking of? . . . Surely I knew how the matter stood at the time . . . But such a likeness . . . Ah! the daughter of Mademoiselle Raucourt, perhaps . . . Impossible; it has always been maintained that that notorious actress was not enough of a woman to have children . . . I give it up."

"You seem vastly bewildered, my poor Léonard," whispered the ex-Favourite, guessing my mystification. "I will wager you

are seeking very far afield for an explanation which lies close at hand . . . . We will talk of this later."

Thus chattering, we reached Mariet's. The countess engaged her rooms, and eager to make me some important communications, she sent away her maid and her lackey, telling them to see to her trunks and her carriage.

When we were alone, Madame Du Barry made me sit by her side, as an old and intimate acquaintance, and said:

"I received all the letters you wrote me from the Rhine, friend Léonard, and the demand you have made upon me in response to my offer of 1789. It was understood that you could rely upon me. So here I am . . . . for it was not possible to send anything from France either into the Temple, where a golden key might save our unhappy Sovereigns, or to the army of the emigrants who, for want of money, are unable to bring means of persuasion to bear upon the German minds. My house at Luciennes is watched day and night by the patriots; to remove a tooth-pick from it would ensure a search, and I dare not even expose the treasures it contains to the light of the sun.

"It was necessary, therefore," continued the countess, "that I should leave the Kingdom in order to come to the assistance of the Throne and the Altar . . . . Do not laugh, Léonard, at that last word; for more than six months I have been concealing at Luciennes two worthy priests from among those who used to damn me so heartily in the days of my favour. Revolutions, my lad, bring about strange metamorphoses: these pious persons have bestowed upon me a plenary title to Paradise; they would have given me a title to ten; and yet they have been able to convince themselves with their own eyes that I have not yet become the penitent Magdalen . . . .

"By the way, nay, very much by the way," continued Madame Du Barry, "how is it you did not at once recognize the young Duc d'Aiguillon in my maid's clothes? In him you see a noble recruit, a newly-dubbed knight, whom I am leading to victory beneath the banner of fidelity."

"And who is the lady who will fasten on the spurs he is sure to win?" I asked, with a smile.

"A pretty question!" replied the countess. "Surely it will

fall to her who leads him to battle to attend him through his armed vigil."

"Nothing could be fairer."

"It is a bore, nevertheless Léonard; inexperience is so silly."

"With a good instructress it does not last long...."

"But what are we talking about, when such noble, such sacred interests claim all our solicitude? To resume. The municipals of Luciennes and the administrators of the Department of Seine-et-Oise believe that I have come here in pursuit of my diamonds, which were stolen, as you doubtless heard at the time; but this is only the pretext of my journey..., I have really come to discuss with M. and Madame de Crussol,\* with Madame de Calonne, with the President Deville, and with you, my dear Léonard, the best means of selling two brilliants valued at two millions of livres which I had buried in a safe spot in the wood of Vesinet near Saint-Germain.... The proceeds shall be at the disposal of the illustrious captives, or of the Princes, according to the more or less pressing needs of either...."

"If you will believe me, madame, go to none of those whom you have mentioned. They are all in want of money, and the sum which may be of use in fighting for the cause of the Throne would be greatly diminished to the advantage of private necessities. The emigrants at present in London are amateur exiles; the French Monarchy will not emerge from the abyss in which it is plunged so long as it has no supports but such as they.... States are not saved by making music nor by coffee-house devotions. It is on the banks of the Rhine that the source of the blood shed for the King should be nourished; even then, the division of the supplies will be a difficult matter enough.... Listen, madame; I know an English jeweller who will buy your two brilliants and pay for them on the spot."

"What! two millions!"

"He may even offer more than you ask for them: that is his way...."

"Well, I will put myself in your hands."

\* The family of de Crussol formerly bore the name of de Bastel and is of Languedoc origin. It has four principal branches, namely (1) the Barons de Crussol, now Ducs d'Uzès, (2) the Marquis de Crussol et de Montansier, (3) the Marquis de Florensac and (4) the Comtes d'Amboise et d'Ambijoux.

"But madame, watched as you are, have you not felt any alarm lest your diamonds should be stolen?"

"That would be impossible.... I carried them on my person."

"All the more reason."

"It was impossible, I tell you..."

Madame Du Barry had brought her carriage; we set out the same night for London, where we arrived at an early hour the next morning. The countess was expected; she took up her abode in a furnished house which had been hired on behalf of M. de Bouillé, who, however, had not come to occupy it. This house, in which were already living M. de Saint-Far, the natural son of the Duc d'Orléans, the Princesse d'Hénin, the Duchesse de Mortemart, M. Bertrand de Moléville and the Baron de Breteuil, thus became a kind of colony, a sort of committee-rooms of the Royalist party, which had for its object to induce the Cabinet of St. James to declare war on the Republican government of France. The two ministers, de Breteuil and Bertrand de Moléville were at the head of this Royalist agency; but crammed full of systems and false theories, they were able to decide on nothing, and consequently to obtain nothing from a Court which it required very plausible arguments to arouse from its patient and prudent system of indecision.

Doubtless the British government and aristocracy were favourably disposed towards the side of the French Court; but it was not thus with the people. In the year 1792, the words liberty, equality, national sovereignty, and Republican principles generally were quite as freely invoked in London as in Paris; Patriotic sentiments were scrawled on every wall; in a word the popular spirit had been communicated across the Channel, and John Bull felt the germs of a new revolution fermenting in his breast.

Such were the motives which made the Crown and especially the Parliament of Great Britain so slow, or rather so timid, in their decisions. At that time, as always, they obeyed the great maxim of English politics: "What have we to lose and what have we to gain in taking such or such a side?"... Now the Cabinet of St. James feared that in declaring against the French Revolution, before the latter positively threatened the peace of

Europe and thus justified a general resort to arms, it feared I say lest it should arouse in the English people a movement in sympathy with a neighbouring nation unjustly thrust back into its confines of servitude and oppression.

M. le Marquis de Chauvelin,\* who was still in England as French Ambassador, and who was well-known for his philosophical opinions, did all in his power to keep up the indecision of the English cabinet, insisting upon the inevitability of a revolutionary movement in the United Kingdom in the event of a declaration of war upon France. And M. de Chauvelin's direct logic, eager and brusque in its frankness, left but a poor opportunity to the old-fashioned carpet subtleties of Versailles, as displayed with infinite circumambulation by Messieurs Bertrand de Moléville, de Calonne, and de Breteuil. As to M. de Talleyrand, the ex-Bishop of Autun, who was then in London in a plain frock and periwig, not the most acute observer could have discovered what he had come to do.... To hear him talk, one would have thought that he was by turns the friend of Plato and the friend of Aristotle, without being able to add that he was still more the friend of truth.... He was to be seen tacking about incessantly between M. de Breteuil and M. de Chauvelin; smiling to the one, shaking hands with the other, never repudiating the tricolor, never harbouring the white flag of France.... This without prejudice to the most charming compliments which His ex-Grandeur paid to the emigrant ladies, and especially, so they said, to Madame de Crussol.

Meanwhile, I took up my quarters again in my little lodging in Air Street. Two days after my arrival, I was visited by Madame Du Barry. It was barely seven o'clock in the morning, in the month of October; and I was far from expecting so early a visit from a woman in whose ante-room, eighteen years ago, Princes of the Blood had been known to dance attendance for half an hour and more. I was still in bed. The countess,

\* Bernard François Marquis de Chauvelin, 1766—1832, had been Ambassador to the Republic of Genoa under Louis XV. He was bitten with the Revolution, and in 1792 was sent by the revolutionary government on a special mission to London. After the Restoration, he was elected to the Chamber of Deputies, where he made a certain display as a champion of the popular cause, and retired from politics in 1829, not long before his principles triumphed in the overthrow of Charles X. and the usurpation of Louis Philippe. His speeches in debate would appear to have been marked by some wit and originality.

seeing the key in the door, entered without hesitation, and while I was apologizing for receiving her with so little ceremony, she displayed still less by plumping herself down at the foot of my bed.

"I could not wait before coming to see you, my dear Léonard," said Madame Du Barry. "What you told me the other day of the French nobility here has proved absolutely true. They have all asked me for money with an *Œil-de Boeuf* unconstraint mingled with so much cynicism that you can form no idea of it. More than twelve thousand francs have already passed from my pockets into theirs. I am quite willing to assist the faithful subjects of the King out of the bounties of his grandfather. But they belong in the first place to me, and I at least reserve the right to choose those whom I will help, and myself to fix the limits of my benevolence. As you very well said, my dear Léonard, let us first aid the general cause. We can see later what is to be done for individuals. In the latter case," added the countess, "I think it would be right to begin with the poor devils who, in order to be able to fight on the banks of the Rhine, have their breeches sold by the ladies of their thoughts, as was shown in the letter you showed me. And so before the amateur exiles, as you call them, have had time to swallow up my two brilliants in addition to some sixteen thousand pounds sterling in letters of credit upon different bankers which Vandenyver handed me before my departure from Paris, I have come to see you, so that we may place the whole in safe keeping."

"Nothing easier," I replied. "Since you have determined to sell your diamonds in order to assist the Princes and hasten the release of the illustrious captives of the Temple, let us go this very morning to my jeweller, the stoical, conscientious and opulent William, and let us finish this piece of business at once. As to the letters of credit, it would perhaps be as well to confide them to this reliable person, who will give you a receipt and deposit them in his strong-room."

"That is a good idea. Well then, I am ready to start, Léonard . . ."

"But, madame la comtesse, how can I proceed before you to make so very elementary a toilet . . .?"

"Chaste and timorous Léonard," exclaimed Madame Du Barry,

with a hearty burst of laughter.... "I have always heard that when anything alarms one, one should proceed as far as possible in its direction, so as to know what one has to do with...."

"Alarm! ah, what a word, madame la comtesse!..."

And poor Lucette, who all this while was writing me such affectionate letters from Paris.... But then there are rights of priority....

"Taking everything into consideration," said Madame Du Barry, as we were on the point of entering William's shop together, "I think it is better that you should do this business alone, without even saying that the diamonds are mine. I do not much care, you see, to have it related all over Europe how remunerative Louis XV.'s affection proved to me. And as to the letters of credit, which would give rise to the same remarks, keep them yourself, Léonard; you can return them to me, either all together or partially, as I require them. Perhaps, after all, it is better that I should have a banker of my own nation rather than an English one."

Madame Du Barry accordingly waited for me in her carriage outside William's door. I went in alone, and while I was inside, this is what happened in the street.

During one of the three journeys which the countess had made to England in the matter of her suit for the recovery of her stolen jewels, she had made the acquaintance, on the crossing, of a very polite, very gallant young man, who had busied himself about her with true French chivalry what time she suffered from a bad attack of sea-sickness. This gentleman had asked and obtained permission to wait upon Madame Du Barry in London. Julie even assured me that his name had soon been added to the list of Jeanne Vaubernier's complaisances, which had become a long one by the year 1792. It is certain at least that the Frenchman had received the ex-Favourite's hospitality. But what she did not know was, that her amiable fellow-countryman was none other than the Republican Blache, a sworn enemy of the Court and all its belongings.

Madame Du Barry, so soon as she was made aware of the opinions of this Blache,\* and of the ugly part he had been sent to play in London, determined not to see him again, and

\* Apparently the Blache who became War Minister under the Republic.

to rid herself of him at all costs should he again call upon her. But things happened otherwise. While I was concluding my bargain with William, Blache, passing by in the Strand, recognized Madame Du Barry as she leant forward at the carriage-window, and reproached her civilly with not having acquainted him with her arrival in London.

The countess replied somewhat coldly; but he seemed to take but little notice of her tone, and continued to converse with the lady in the easiest and most affable accents.

"So you are waiting for some one, madame la comtesse, at the door of the richest jeweller in the world?"

"Yes, I am waiting for M. Léonard, who has been so kind as to undertake to realize for me the value of a little diamond . . . My journeys and my law-suit have ruined me."

"Really! to the extent of compelling you to sell your diamonds?" replied Blache, in a tone that was almost one of banter . . . "You surprise me, madame la comtesse . . . And I am still more surprised that M. Léonard, the confidant of the French Court, and the vainest man in the world, should consent to sell a little diamond . . . But your secrets are your own, madame; and lest you should think that I desire to encroach upon them, I will take my leave."

And without adding a word, Blache bowed to Madame Du Barry, who was delighted to see him go away before my return . . . But he did not go away entirely, as you shall see . . .

Gladness is always indiscreet. In my delight at having sold Madame Du Barry's two brilliants for 2,200,000 livres, that is to say for 200,000 livres more than she had hoped to obtain, I called this enormous figure to her from the jeweller William's door . . . I did not at that moment notice that a little shoe-black, whose box stood near the carriage, suddenly ran off; I remembered it afterwards, and this recollection enabled me to explain the events that followed.

## C H A P T E R XVIII

The report of the spy—Hostile projects against me—Julie's warning—My leap from the window—The flower-maker's bedroom—An embarrassing hospitality—It was bound to end like that.

"We hold an important secret, which will help to show us what has become of the diamonds recently stolen from the Wardrobe . . ." So spoke Blache, within an hour after leaving Madame Du Barry.

"Oho!" replied his interlocutor,\* "that is an important discovery."

"So much the more, monsieur, in that it gives us the certainty that the robbery was committed by the agents of the *ci-devant* King."

"This, Monsieur Blache, appears to me to be difficult to establish."

"Shall I convince you when I tell you that Léonard, the former hair-dresser of the Queen and the secret agent of the Princes, has just made a sale of 2,200,000 livres to William the jeweller, and that the courtesan Du Barry was waiting for him at the door?"

"Are you sure you have not made a mistake, Monsieur Blache?"

"I myself, monsieur, saw Madame Du Barry and spoke to her. She told me herself that Léonard, for whom she was awaiting, was engaged in selling for her account 'a little diamond' to

\* The name of this person was known to the original editor of the *Souvenirs de Léonard*, who explains in a foot-note his reasons for withholding it: he had died a few years since with a very honourable political reputation, and the editor considers that he owes this silence to the memory of a great citizen. This note appears in the 1838 edition; the Marquis de Chauvelin died in 1832, when the Orleanist usurpation had become an accomplished fact and when consequently Chauvelin's reputation in politics would have been considered quite honourable. There is little doubt in the present editor's mind that Chauvelin was the "interlocutor" in question.

the rich jeweller, and so soon as I was gone, a young shoe-black, whom I posted near the carriage, heard Léonard cry out the sum of 2,200,000 livres.... Those seem to me to be facts difficult to contest, and I venture to think, monsieur, that you rely upon my truthfulness."

"No doubt, no doubt, Monsieur Blache; but is it not possible that the diamonds were Madame Du Barry's own property?"

"You know hers were stolen."

"All of them?"

"Presumably. There were 1,500,000 francs' worth of them, and it is hardly possible to believe, in any case, that after that theft there should remain to her more than 2,000,000 francs in diamonds."

"No, it is not probable that the Favourite possessed close upon 4,000,000 francs' worth of diamonds, when you remember that a few years since she realized the principal of an income of fifty to sixty thousand livres to pay her debts."

"So you see, monsieur, that the diamonds sold to William must needs form part of those stolen from the Wardrobe; and as to Madame Du Barry's waiting at the jeweller's door, there is nothing extraordinary in that: Léonard, they say, is the lover, or rather one of the lovers of that woman."

"One of her lovers, I should say, Monsieur Blache: for I have seen you yourself, not so long ago, paying considerable attention to Madame Du Barry."

"The duties of my mission," replied Blache, with a smile, "might involve more disagreeable tasks than that . . ."

"Yes, as you say," resumed the interlocutor, with an air of reflection, "there is every reason to suppose that these diamonds form part of those stolen from the Wardrobe."

"And since France is still at peace with England, this affair is one of those which allow of extradition, and we have a good and lawful cause to evoke the law of nations. Think, monsieur: we may be able to restore a capital of 2,200,000 livres, and perhaps much more, to coffers of the republic. On my soul and conscience, I maintain that we are entitled to ask for extradition."

It was ten o'clock in the evening. I had just returned from spending the day with Madame Du Barry and her noble fellow-

dwellers at her hotel. All these gentles, formerly so proud, had become friendly to the extent of consenting to dine with unworthy me, just as though Louis XVI.'s promise had been realized, and the line of the "Barons de Léonard" had begun in my person. I was preparing to go to bed, worn out with the errands on which the Favourite had employed me during the day, when suddenly a woman rushed into my room, panting with haste and terror . . . It was Julie, or if you prefer, the Landgravine of Norkitten.

"Quick, my dear Léonard," she cried, "follow me, there is not a moment to lose. You will be arrested; there is a constable at the door, with his myrmidons; the house will be invaded in three minutes."

"But I have nothing to fear . . ."

"No buts, my friend; follow me, I say. I know this house, I have lived here . . . Come . . ."

And seizing my hand, Jullie dragged me towards the staircase; but there was no way of going down. Already the constable and his merry men were in the house, at the foot of the aforesaid staircase . . . they were beginning to climb it.

"This way," said the Landgravine, pushing me into a little passage, with a window at the end of it.

"But I shall be caught in this passage without any outlet."

"Without outlet!" said Julie, opening the window. "And how about this? . . . Jump, Léonard . . . it is hardly eight feet, and a grass-plot below . . . Jump, don't be afraid . . . I will follow you . . ."

She had hardly done speaking when I was below, and she too . . . an ex-dancer is as light of body as of love. She grasped my hand once more, hurried me across the little garden, opened a back-door, and we found ourselves in one of those blind alleys called "yards," leading on to a street that was not Air Street . . . I was saved!

Julie, without slackening pace, led me through a host of turnings to a little street near Piccadilly, whose name I have forgotten, and stopping before a pretty little oval door, said, "Here it is," and knocked. We climbed to the second floor; she opened a door, then another . . . and we were at the Landgravine of Norkitten's: a pretty little room, newly furnished, but yet only one room.

"There, friend Léonard, is all that is left of my manors. I pay four guineas a quarter to my landlord, and no one disputes my enjoyment of this retreat....no one even shares it at present."

"What, and the cutter?"

"He has been in Poland during the last two months. Yesterday you did not give me time to tell you, so eager were you to go and play Louis XV. the Second!"

"Mischief! ....And so Count Delvinski, after all you have done for him ...."

"Is struggling to do much more for me, and endeavouring to recover in Poland some last remnants of fortune, but especially honours, which he will invite me to share."

"That is right....But now, my dear Julie, will you please to tell me the meaning of all that has happened!" said I, seating myself beside the good fire blazing in the hearth.

"You shall hear all. I had gone to carry some flowers to Lady Clerges,\* and I was showing them to her in the drawing-room, while three gentlemen were talking in English in a corner. I know the language pretty well, and listened without seeming to.

"'It is quite true, my lord,' said one of the three, 'I have just heard it at the Chancellor of the Exchequer's. The French Ambassador asks for the immediate arrest of the famous Léonard, who is accused of having sold some of the diamonds stolen from the Wardrobe in Paris. The Minister was obliged to consent: it was a clear case for extradition. By this time Léonard should be arrested....The Ambassador also demanded that Madame Du Barry should be brought up; but the Chancellor declared there was no case against her....'

"You may imagine, my dear Léonard, that after hearing all that, I did not waste much time at Lady Clerges'. I came as fast as a coach would take me to within some yards of your door. I did the rest on foot, without appearing too hurried .... and I preceded the constable and his crew by a dozen paces .... You know the rest."

"And so," said I, with a laugh which was not quite on the right side of my face. "here am I proclaimed the thief of the

\* *Sic. Clerges?*

Crown diamonds....That is right, messieurs the Jacobins, impute to us the crimes which you commit yourselves: that crowns your manœuvres!....The worst is, that if I tell the truth, it may compromise Madame Du Barry; for I believe she has made up her mind to return to France....This becomes embarrassing, and requires reflection....I must go and see the countess."

"What are you thinking of, Léonard? You would be arrested the minute you set foot in the street...."

"That is true...."

"Wait till to-morrow, and I will take a letter for you to Madame Du Barry."

"That will be wisest....But how can I thank you, my dear Julie?" I exclaimed, embracing her much after the manner of our preludes of 1769....

"A great thing, truly, to do a little service to a friend of twenty-three years' standing!.... Say no more of that, I beg you...." And then, bursting into laughter, she added, through this transport of hilarity. "But this is quite another matter, upon my word! Where are you to sleep?..."

"My dear Julie, a friend whom you have known for twenty-three years...."

"Is essentially a respectable person, my dear Léonard.... And then, do you see that portrait?" added she, pointing to a likeness of Delvinski, painted in the uniform of a Polish officer.

"Did you look at it every day, Countess, during the last years of your stay in Paris?"

"Oh no, but Count Delvinski and I have made a compact which misfortune has cemented: I wish to remain faithful to it.... Nay more, Léonard, though you laugh: I can remain faithful to it.... Do you know that we have promised to marry one another?..."

"I am abject."

"That should be easy," said Julie, with a smile, "after a whole day devoted to the Comtesse Du Barry...."

I made no reply, but said to myself:

"She shall pay for that impertinence."

Laughing all the while, the Landgravine Dowager threw on

the floor a pillow, bolster and mattress, so as to make her bed into two, and began to make me up a couch, humming a parody of the refrain of the Visitandines: \*

Enfant cheri des dames,  
Laissez, en ce pays,  
Dormir les vieilles femmes,  
Même loin des maris.

"There, you dangerous Léonard, there is your bed. Envelope yourself, as the wise man says, in your virtue; as for me, I shall envelope myself in my curtains, for decency's sake.... and also perhaps so as not to have to blush at the comparison between 1770 and 1792. Like that we shall be quite comfortable...."

I said nothing. She put out the lamp, and we each lay down on our own beds.... But half an hour later the Landgravine of Norkitten exclaimed:

"Léonard, Léonard, they are right: you are a thief.... But I am good-natured: I shall not ask for your extradition!"

\* The nuns of the Visitation, the least strict of the religious orders.

## CHAPTER XIX

Reflections—Madame Du Barry visits Pitt—The British sorcerer—Tragic end of young Maussabré—A treasure worthy of the Arabian nights—Expulsion of French from England—Madame Du Barry returns to France—My fantastic vision.

NIGHT brings counsel, says the old proverb; and although the night I had just spent was somewhat disturbed—so readily do our early inclinations revive—I had not neglected to reflect upon my situation, which was much more critical than it had at first seemed to me. There were two roads open to me: either I must leave London immediately and re-cross the Channel, or I should be obliged to explain the origin of the diamonds sold the day before to William. Now both these courses were bound to injure the cause I had at heart. If I left London, I should be unable, as the Princes put it, to prick on to greater activity their agents accredited to the British government; and if I declared that the diamonds I had sold belonged to Madame Du Barry, not only should I give cause for a suspicion as to the use we intended to make of their proceeds, but I should compromise the countess herself, and make her return to France impossible.... I saw no middle course, and knew not to what decision to come. Julie offered to go out and to look in at the flower-factory. I accepted her offer, begging her to hasten her return, so as to enable me to act according to circumstances, before the affair of the diamonds got quite noised abroad.

The Landgravine was not long absent. She had found a letter for me at Madame T.'s, and she brought it me before going elsewhere, since they had told her that it had been left by Madame Du Barry's servant. I opened it eagerly; the countess wrote to me in substance as follows:

"Set your mind at rest, my dear Léonard, you shall not be taken back to France bound hand and foot; your business is

arranged. I learnt yesterday without delay what had taken place; it was a little late in the evening to wait upon the Chancellor of the Exchequer; but the danger was imminent, and Mr. Pitt never sleeps. I went to his house, and on giving my name to the footman was immediately shown in.

"Mr. Pitt was working alone in his study, bending over a desk loaded with papers and imperfectly lighted by a lamp whose rays were concentrated upon a document which His Grace\* was rapidly annotating as I entered the room. At the sound of my footsteps, the minister raised the green taffeta shade which surmounted the lamp. I surmised that he was not sorry to meet the woman who had overthrown Choiseul and performed perhaps a still cleverer feat in giving him d'Aiguillon for a successor. Apparently the examination was a satisfactory one, for Pitt, who is not naturally a genial man, said to me, with a smile:

"In what way can I be of service to you, madame la comtesse?"

"My lord, may I ask Your Grace to keep secret what I have come to tell you?"

"Ah, you have come to tell me something," replied Mr. Pitt, leaning back in his arm-chair so as to listen to me with more attention.... "I can promise you secrecy, madame la comtesse.... so long as it is not contrary to the interests of Great Britain."

"Not at all, my lord; only it may help the cause of the unfortunate and august family with whose misfortunes Your Grace, like every true and loyal Englishman, sympathizes."

"Speak, madame," replied the chancellor, without confirming my last words.

"Yesterday, upon the demand of the French Ambassador, you authorized the arrest of Léonard, whom the agents of the republic accuse of having taken part in a robbery of the Royal Wardrobe.... This imputation is a calumny: the diamonds which Léonard sold were mine. Here is the invoice of the jeweller who sold them to me in 1773."

"I knew that, madame la comtesse."

"What, my lord, you knew.... You astonish me vastly..."

\* See.

"I can put an end to your surprise in two words: for special reasons, William has my express orders at once to inform me of any purchases he may make which place a sum exceeding one thousand pounds in the hands of the French refugees. Yesterday, within two hours after buying your diamonds from Léonard, the jeweller was here, in my study; and you shall see that I know more than you yourself do concerning the origin of the two brilliants sold in your name. They belonged to the Queen of Spain, \* who in 1772 presented them to her Favourite, † who sold them in Paris to the jeweller from whom you bought them, and who made a profit on them of 600,000 livres. They cost you 1,900,800 livres: and so in selling them to William you too have made a handsome profit. However, William will not be a loser by the transaction: he is an honest man, but seldom duped."

"Indeed, my lord, you are better informed than I about the origin of my diamonds.... and I cannot imagine how Your Grace knows all this."

"Wait, that is not all: in 1791 the two brilliants in question were buried by yourself, madame la comtesse, in the wood of Vesinet, between Nanterre and Saint-Germain. It was a fine moonlight night, and a handsome young man, worthy of all your confidence, was thus enabled to take a note of the place where you had made this deposit.... That young man's name was M. de Maussabré.' §

"My surprise is extreme."

"I have not done, madame la comtesse.... On the 9th of October last, at eight o'clock in the evening, you set out from Luciennes, accompanied by one of your footmen, and carrying the plan traced by Maussabré. You were proceeding to the spot where lay buried the little oak casket containing the two brilliants. Am I right?"

"I am bewildered, my lord; I see that independently of the genius with which Heaven has favoured you to the greater glory of England, it has moreover accorded you the gift of divination."

\* Maria Luisa, wife of Charles III.

† Manuel Godoy, Prince de la Paix.

§ This last word was half obliterated by what seemed to be a tear fallen from the countess's eye. (*Author's Note.*)

"No, madame la comtesse," replied Mr. Pitt, pressing my arm; "but know that our English policy consists in being well informed, and I can assure you that we have in France almost as many pairs of trained ears to listen as you have indiscreet mouths to talk.... I will give you a fresh proof.... The 2,200,000 livres which you have obtained for your diamonds are destined for the service of the Royalist cause, and it is for this that you wish to pledge me to secrecy...."

"Your Grace can say what you please, you have the art of divination."

"You shall have a higher idea yet of my sorcery," continued the minister, with a laugh. "You have come this evening to ask me to countermand the order for Léonard's arrest, because it is through him that the Princes are to receive assistance through the produce of your diamonds. He alone can carry communications from the faithful subjects of Louis XVI. to the Temple, thanks to the intermediary of a very clever little actress called Lucette. Reassure yourself, madame la comtesse: I know all this, and much more besides; but you have nothing to fear from me, nor from any member of His Majesty's cabinet. As to Léonard, I only authorized his arrest for form's sake, and to satisfy a political feeling of seemliness in which M. de Chauvelin is good enough to believe.\* Léonard took fright too quickly: the constable charged with his arrest was instructed to take him home to supper and then to let him go.... Tell him that he may go about in London as much as he will; no one shall see him; and if the French Legation take me to task for my altered determination, I shall know what to answer without compromising the secret which you would have deigned to confide to me had I not already known it."

"So that is our case, my dear Léonard," concluded the countess. "Little snail hiding in your shell, come out again without fear; the Patriots' big feet shall not crush you. I would not go to bed before writing you all this.... England's pale sun is piercing through the thick veil of fog in which London is enshrouded; I am racked with sleep, but I shall not get

\* "Pitt was deceived," says the original editor here, in a footnote. But it has already been shown what a blind and devoted admirer of Chauvelin's ~~was~~ this same original editor, and not much importance need be attached to ~~this~~ opinion.



into bed before I have sent this letter to Madame T., who will doubtless find a means of conveying it to you... Come and see me in the evening. Good-bye."

In the course of a joyous breakfast of which Julie compelled me to partake, she asked me with an expressive grimace about a certain Lucette whose name figured in the note-books of the English Premier. I told my hostess the story of my witty pupil: the episode of Lady Barmesson made her laugh heartily.

"I have nothing so good as that in my collection," she said, modestly. "My style was different. As to M. de Maussabré, I have met him in society. He was a handsome lad, upon my word; Madame du Barry knew how to choose the aristocrats to whom she showed hospitality: for you know it was at her house that he was arrested a few days after the 10th of August. All the world knows of the passion of the Duc de Brissac for the ex-Favourite of Louis XV. Maussabré was the general's aide-de-camp, and you know what the rights of those officers are... just like the pages of the middle-ages and their fair employers... That is why my late husband always refused to have an aide-de-camp.

"Well then, a few days after the 10th of August, a certain Audouin, a commissary of the Assembly, was hunting for nobles and priests in the neighbourhood of Saint-Germain, and received word that the Château of Luciennes was full of both. Audouin marched off there with fifty gendarmes, commenced by breakfasting sumptuously at the countess's expense, and then searched the house... There was one door which remained locked. When the commissary asked to have it opened, Madame Du Barry gave signs of uneasiness... and replied, after many hesitations, that that room contained nothing but dirty linen, and that she did not know where the key was... A few blows with the butt-end of a musket did as well, and hiding in the room, they found young Maussabré.

"The countess was unable to conceal the grief she experienced at this unhappy discovery; and she swooned away when the bloodthirsty commissary told her that the young whelp would be taken to Paris, and that the nation would settle his business before his teeth were much longer. Madame Du

Barry gave Maussabré her carriage, and took leave of him with every mark of affection.

"The poor boy, on taking leave of the countess, had the presentiment that he would be murdered; and he was right. In the morning of the 4th of September, imprisoned in the Abbaye, he tried to escape through the chimney of his cell. The jailers, perceiving this, fired at him several times without hitting him. This savage method having failed, they heaped up straw in the chimney, and set fire to it. Poor Maussabré, half stifled with the smoke, fell from his dark place of refuge, and was murdered at the prison-door... He was one more of those," added Julie, maliciously, "of whom Madame Du Barry can claim to be the widow."

I saw the countess that evening in bed, surrounded by almost as numerous a court as used to crowd about her in the days of her favour. But in London the motive for this courting was still baser than at Versailles: formerly she was the distributor of great offices of State, titles, orders, in a word of all that procures consideration and respect; but now people abased themselves before Madame Du Barry for the sake of obtaining money. I am bound to say that by preference it was not to the most servile that she gave money, but to the most necessitous... broken-down priests, ancient lady-emigrants, faithful servants, who had gone into exile for love of their masters, and whom the latter were unable to support. "Young men of fashion and pretty women on the right side of forty," said the ex-Favourite, with a conviction of speech which was more frank than moral, "are never in want, wherever they may be...." What a thing it is to have been a milliner's apprentice before attaining the condition of an uncrowned queen!

When the crowd of courtiers whom I found around Madame Du Barry had all departed, we arranged that a considerable sum should be sent to the Princes, in order to enable them to release their carriages, which had been seized in different places, and to pay an instalment on the money due to the Royalist troops, without being driven to the manufacture of false assignats.

I pass over a space of four months, to come to the time when Madame Du Barry, despite the advice of her friends, despite the accounts she received on every hand of the danger

to which she would expose herself, determined to return to France. The unhappy Louis XVI. had perished on the scaffold; each day torrents of blood deluged the square known as the Place de la Révolution; the guillotine was established in permanence in every city of the Republic; and every head that rose above the crowd was doomed to fall, even though it consented to bow before those in power for the moment.

"Wait," said I, one evening, to Madame Du Barry. "The storms of the Revolution, like those of nature, can be but passing ones; men's arms must needs weary of carrying thunderbolts.... You are certain to win your lawsuit: the diamonds stolen from you will be returned to you; their proceeds and the capital which you brought to England with you should suffice to assure you an honourable existence throughout a long life; and I once more repeat, the troubles in France cannot continue."

"My dear Léonard, but what can those people do to me, when full of confidence I return to live among them?..."

"They will accuse you of plotting...."

"Impossible! an impenetrable mystery surrounds the remittances which I have made to the banks of the Rhine; and now that the British cabinet is about to declare against the Republic, I have no reason to fear that Mr. Pitt will break his word."

"The services which you have rendered to our exiled countrymen will be made into crimes.... And then, madame, realize that your wealth will be looked upon as a proof of your guilt, though you should dress your head with a red cap.... Have you forgotten how they cried, from the top of their Mountain, 'War to the châteaus, peace to the cottages!'"

"I shall say to them, 'Take all I possess!'"

"Madame la comtesse, I am in despair at seeing you so obstinately determined upon your unfortunate project.... They will kill you...."

"I do not think so....And beside, I must absolutely return to France."

"I confess that it is impossible for me to see that necessity, unless an imperious inclination...."

"Léonard, I am forty-two years old, and love has become to me as soup or beef. But there is one passion," continued the countess, eagerly, "which seems to spring from the ashes of

the myrtles consumed; a passion which no longer fires the breast but dominates the mind: I mean the love of riches...."

And rising, the ex-Favourite went to her secrétaire, took from it a large sheet of paper, handed it to me, and said:

"I have no secrets for you; read that."

I read as follows:

*Memorandum of the Treasure hidden at Luciennes.*

*First.* In the place in which the gardening implements are kept: a service consisting of a porcelain dish mounted in gold, a tea-pot, a tea-kettle, a chafing-dish, a milk-jug, a large coffee-pot, a porringer with lid and saucer, three small spoons, a small tea-strainer, one hundred counters stamped with Madame Du Barry's arms: all the above in gold and of very precious workmanship.

*Second.* In a box buried in the same place: fifteen hundred and thirty-one louis d'or of twenty-four livres, a diamond necklace, two diamond ear-drops, each consisting of nine or ten brilliants: the front ones very large; three rings, one in diamonds, one in emeralds and diamonds, and the last in rubies and diamonds; a necklace of fine and very large pearls; a pair of ear-drops, also of fine pearls; a necklace of gold drops, and two or three gold chains for the neck.

*Third.* In a small deal box, in the keeping of the wife of the Sieur Deliant, parquet-rubber: a repeating watch enriched with diamonds; a small packet containing fifteen diamonds of five to six grains each; a packet of small rubies; two flat diamonds for rings; a small money-box shaped like a child, in gold and blue enamel; a pair of gold spurs, once the property of the late M. de Brissac; in a little cardboard box, a necklace of emeralds and diamonds, including one very large one, weighing fifty grains; a gold pencil-case enriched with diamonds; a mustard-pot, a small salver and two goblets, all in gold.

*Fourth.* In a blue velvet trunk, with clasps of silver gilt, hidden beneath a staircase in a room used as a wardrobe: one dinner-cover in gold, and crested; four sugar-spoons, two olive-spoons

and a punch-ladle, all in gold; and a case containing one dozen gold coffee-spoons.

*Fifth.* In the chest of drawers in the room next to the bedroom: a pair of gold buckles encrusted with pearls; a light tortoise-shell box, mounted in gold; a gold stopper, with a large diamond on the top.

*Sixth.* In a chest of drawers in the bed-room: a basin and ewer in rock-crystal adorned with gold; two jasper goblets mounted in gold; a bracelet of antique stones, mounted in gold; a goblet, two water-bottles and a salver of rock-crystal, all mounted in gold; twenty-one rings consisting of different precious stones mounted in gold; several portraits of the de Brissac family, mounted in gold or set with diamonds; a full-length portrait of M. de Brissac and Madame Du Barry, in a medallion with a secret clasp and adorned with diamonds.

*Seventh.* In a cellar beneath the staircase, in a barrel: nine and a half dozens of plates, eighteen candlesticks, a dozen sauce-pans and one pot, all in silver; nineteen large silver dish-covers and other articles in silver.

*Eighth and last.* In the garden of Morin, the footman, are hidden eleven sacks containing twelve hundred and forty double louis each, brought back from London after Madame Du Barry's second journey.

"Yes, madame," said I, returning the paper to Madame Du Barry, "I can imagine that one does not willingly abandon such riches as these."

"And note this," said the countess: "to anyone who said that all this cost me no great trouble to acquire, I should reply, 'Possibly. But since I am no longer able to procure any more by the same means, I must needs preserve what I have, even at the risk of my life.'"

"Ah, madame, that is very dear."

"You are always thinking of the cost price, Léonard; but I only look at the real value. I shall go in a week."

About this time it became impossible for French people to remain in England in an undecided position between emigration and business. Great Britain was at war with our stormy republic. It was necessary either to declare oneself an emigrant and incur



the fatal inscription in France, or to become naturalized an Englishman if one alleged reasons of business, or quit England with the least possible delay, if one did not wish to lose one's quality as a French citizen. Madame T. was in this last necessity: she owned land in the Touraine, and would have incurred the confiscation of her property had she applied for naturalization.\*

Up to that moment I had not thought very deeply upon my own situation, and on more serious reflection, I found that I was not particularly inclined to join the emigration. I saw my splendid household goods in the Chaussée-d'Antin and even my freehold of the Théâtre Feydeau on the point of being confiscated and sold for the profit of the nation, without any consolation appearing in sight from any other quarter.† For at that time the Princes themselves were in a very critical position. The Republican armies took the offensive with an impetuosity that was very distressing to their enemies; the Austrians, beaten in several pitched engagements, were in retreat on several sides; and the Prussians were turning homewards, after a deplorable finish to their campaign, in which they had been defeated by the most singular of weapons, the grapes of Champagne. The Russians always expected, always announced in the messages of their sovereign, did not arrive; and the English, placing their elegant and fair-haired Duke of York at the head of a quite small army, which was all that they sent to the Continent, did not promise any very decided support to the cause of the Bourbons.

However, if I beheld in Germany nothing but vicissitudes without any compensation, the letters which I received from my brother (alas! that source of information was soon to be stilled for ever)§ prevented me from returning to France, where I was regarded as an accredited agent of the Princes, of Pitt and of Coburg. Lucette wrote to me hopefully, because she always expected to be able to protect me; and as a matter of fact, the excellent creature had succeeded up to that time in preventing

\* No foreigner is permitted to hold landed property in France.

† The theatre was actually sold, and became the property of Dufaillis, a rich architect, who lived for many years with Émilie Contat, the actress. He married her on his death-bed, and thus legalized their daughter, who married the Marquis d'Amelot, and brought him a very considerable fortune.

§ The brother was executed about this time, as stated above.



the confiscation of my property. She found herself floated into the intimate traffic of the Mountain, whose members admired in her all the Republican virtues. And this charming madcap, so good-hearted, so complaisant, so obliging and mobile that she flitted perpetually between the Temple and the Committee of Public Safety, between the red cap of the Republic and the fleur-de-lys of the Monarchy, strongly recommended me to return beneath the ægis of her popularity.... But I dared not entrust myself to that support, too fragile to risk my life upon. "Wait, wait," I said to myself, "and see what happens...."

I escorted the poor Comtesse Du Barry to Dover, and saw her depart with my heart full of melancholy presentiments. She returned to France accompanied by M. Auguste Vandenyver, the son of the banker, who had come over to England merely to settle his father's accounts with his correspondents at the time when the commercial relations between France and Great Britain were on the point of ceasing. This voyage, and the relations which the unfortunate young man had had in London with the ex-Favourite, caused the ruin of his father, his brother, and himself.\*

As I stood on the shore at Dover, after bidding farewell to the woman who for six years had held in her capricious hand the tiller of the French monarchy, she appeared to my view, standing on the bridge of the packet, as though already mounting the terrible instrument of execution; and when, at the moment of departure, she waved her hand to me with a kindly smile, I thought I could hear her murmur in my ear:

"Adieu, Léonard, I am ascending towards the Throne of God. I shall receive pardon for my faults, wiped out by martyrdom. The repentant Magdalen will lose the memory of the impurities of this world in the bosom of eternal beatitude."

\* They were guillotined by order of Robespierre, in revenge for their business relations with the House of France.

## CHAPTER XX

Julie philosophizes—She becomes a Polish patriot—Less money and more activity—I leave London with Julie.

ON my return to London, I found all the French population of the town in movement; for not only were the French who were outside the emigration compelled to leave England, but the emigrants themselves were forced to abandon the comfortable state of exile in which they had been living in the British Isles, and compelled by the Court to enrol themselves in the regiment known as Loyal Emigrants, which was under orders to set out at once for the Continent.

The day after my arrival, I received a morning visit from Julie. As a Frenchwoman and not naturalized, she had to bid good-bye to England, Countess of Norkitten though she was.

"I have come to say farewell, Léonard," she said, with her philosophical air. "It is all over: I can succeed in nothing, not even in remaining a flower-maker; and since this is so, I am now about to try and turn myself into a Polish princess palatine."

"You are going to Poland?"

"Yes. I did feel a certain impulse to go and join the Patriots in Paris; but this vocation comes ten years too late. A woman of over forty does not make her fortune in a revolution. And besides there is nothing to be made out of it in any case. All the dancers of the Opera, all the kept women of Paris have fastened on to the togas of our deputies; the actresses of the minor theatres have seized upon the *clubistes*, Jacobins and *cordeliers*. I could do nothing in Paris, therefore, save make plumes for the National Guard or paper crowns for the civic

festivals; I prefer to go and deal in heroism in Poland with Count Delvinski."

"But Julie, have you any means?"

"My furniture is worth twenty-five guineas; my tools and implements about three shillings; that is more than sufficient for the journey."

"But where do you expect to find the count?"

"I don't know: I will seek for him among the snows of the North as Telemachus sought for his father Ulysses among the seas of Greece."

"Under the guidance of Minerva."

"Perhaps, Master Sarcasm; but take care lest I should ask you for a powerful guarantee to assure my wisdom during the journey."

"I am not afraid of you, Countess.... But meantime let us be sensible.... You require more than twenty-five guineas and three shillings in order to rejoin Delvinski, and I cannot imagine that you have not yet remembered the fact that you have in London a friend of twenty-two years' standing."

"I should have thought that I proved to you the other night that I remembered it very well."

"Then remember it altogether, and permit me to be your banker to the extent of two or three hundred louis."

"Just so, and in return I will give you bills upon the restored Kingdom of Poland.... No, my dear Léonard, I don't want your money; such friendships as ours should have none but natural souvenirs."

"This is madness."

"It is a wise decision: great reserves mean great indolences, and I do not wish to send to sleep the activity which I developed when I became a flower-maker.... Activity can be applied to everything: to the stirring up of revolts as to the manufacture of roses and pinks. Delvinski is a man of action; but he is not able to evolve a project. I shall think for him out there, and I believe that we shall succeed, if not in restoring to the Poles their nationality, at least in making the most, on their account, or, if it comes to the worst, on ours alone, of this noble misfortune which can be turned to such good purpose by throwing it as fuel into the flames of the Revolution.... When do you return to Germany, Léonard?"

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"At the earliest opportunity."

"Well then, we will leave together, if you are not afraid of the companionship of a sort of Patriot. I will part from you in Holland, where you have business, you said; I will cross Prussia, which is now only a spectatrix of the combat from which she withdrew in terror; and I will go to Poland and demand Delvinski of all Sarmatian echoes. And if you think fit, you shall appoint yourself my Mentor during the journey which we will undertake together."

In vain I urged Julie to take my money: she persisted in saying that that meant ruined activity. The excellent creature had been a Countess too short a time to have acquired all the easy ways of society: she had not learnt to commit that elegant robbery which consists in borrowing, with the most charming negligence, what one knows one will never be able to repay. But if the ex-dancer was inept at this trick, there was no lack in London of noble personages who were expert enough at it. There was a crowd around me to put it into practice: marquises, countesses, presidentesses, barons, commoners of Malta, all drew on my purse at sight. They all recollecting having protected me in former days, upon occasions of which I had not the remotest remembrance, however hard I might try.... I found it difficult to defend myself against these illustrious importunities; and when I left London, I left behind me four or five hundred louis which I looked upon as so much money lost. It was high time that I should go.

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## CHAPTER XXI

A packet-crossing—A Countess selling cheese—The bagman—A letter from a Princess in the style of the markets—Prince Louis of Prussia—His favourite statue—Madame de Staél and Madame de Récamier—Teutonic tributes.

A CROSSING of thirty or forty leagues is always tedious. It is not long enough to allow the passenger to acquire a fondness for nautical pastimes, and even though he himself be not troubled with sea-sickness, he is subjected to the disgusting spectacle of those that are. Moreover, on board a packet the confusion is so great, both below and on deck, that one is continually taken up with warding off, here a trip of the heels, there a lurch from a staggering fellow-traveller who has not yet found his sea-legs; while elsewhere there are manipulations of ropes which either skin your legs or knock off your hat if you are not quick to bob your head. Julie and I took refuge in the sloop on deck, and wrapped up in my cloak, we disposed ourselves to pass the night in the open air.

When we left Dover, it was blowing a stiff breeze, as the sailors say; but at sunset the wind slackened and became suddenly still: we lay totally becalmed. The next day, when we opened our eyes, great was our surprise to behold the clock-tower of Dover: we were only at about two leagues from the port, and the captain, warning the passengers that we were threatened with a crossing of thirty hours, advised them to take advantage of a boat which was going on shore to send for some provisions. Of this opportune advice everyone gladly availed himself, and the boatmen willingly undertook commissions.... One tall, stiff emigrant, carrying his head very high, walked up to the coxswain, and giving him a guinea, haughtily ordered him to bring him some Cheshire cheese.... The sailor took the coin, said "Yes," and disappeared.

The British seaman can be facetious when he likes, and his facetiousness is generally spiced with malice, especially when it is concerned with playing a prank upon one of those "French dogs," against whom John Bull's bile is so easily aroused. The boat returned in an hour's time, and the poor emigrant learned that it had struck his mischievous errand-man as a good joke to buy him a guinea's worth of cheese.... A guinea's worth of cheese! and in England, where you can get this food for next to nothing, there was enough to form a quarter of a ship's cargo.

The Frenchman fretted and fumed against the coxswain: he would have struck him, only he feared lest the other should exceed him in the art of fisticuffs. The Englishman replied, with all his national phlegm, "It's not my fault; why didn't you say you wanted a shilling's worth or sixpence-worth of cheese?... I thought as how you might want to make a store for your mates in the Royalist armies, who are used to eating cheese, as I'm told; and so I spent all your golden guinea!..." And the man of the sea turned his back upon the emigrant.

However the latter, nobleman though he was, abandoned himself to the most piteous sorrow, and declared to whomsoever would listen to him that the guinea which had just been so unfortunately changed into half a hundred-weight of Cheshire was all he had in the world, and that this amount was to have taken him, with the strictest economy, as far as Ghent. Our countryman's situation was so perplexing, that he had not even any bread to eat with his wretched cheese: he was really to be pitied.

But there was a providence on board which the disappointed Frenchman was far from expecting to encounter: that providence was Julie, my fellow-traveller.

"That gentleman," she said, "has too great a Marquis de Tufières air for us to be able to offer him money; but I love activity, as I have told you, and I feel inclined to go and offer to sell his cheese for him."

"What a poor joke!"

"On the contrary, he will think it a very good one if it succeeds, and we shall manage somehow to make it succeed, if we have to buy it up ourselves to feed the Channel porpoises with."

"Wonderful woman!" I exclaimed, squeezing Julie's hand.

"To business," said she, leaving me; and I heard her offer the emigrant to become a cheesemonger on his behalf.

"Upon my word, madame, you are too kind," he replied with all the grace with which, however haughty we be, we are bound to accept an essential service. "But how can you expect to retail on board this ship that enormous mass of evil-smelling merchandise?"

"Forgive me, monsieur, I hope to succeed."

"God grant it, madame!"

"And send me plenty of cheese-buyers, monsieur."

Julie set up her shop in the sloop, and behold Madame la Landgrave de Norkitten crying in French, in English, nay even in Prussian. "Who wants cheese? buy my cheese!" And the little cheesemonger was still so pretty, she showed such a pretty set of teeth as she cried her odoriferous goods, and her manner was so engaging, that in less than an hour she was sold out... The proceeds were counted, and came to six shillings above the cost price. And thus the emigrant proved to have made a lucky speculation while he thought himself ruined. This episode enabled us to spend a rather amusing hour, which was so much gained from the enemy, in other words, the calm.

We had on board with us a young Parisian hosier, who had conceived the idea, since the Revolution, of smuggling silk stockings into England. His speculation had succeeded so well that he was taking back with him, he said, no less a sum than 10,000 pounds sterling, all earned in less than three months, in spite of his having paid considerable sums to the gentlemen of the English custom-house so as to blind their eyes, in his interest and their own. The young bagman, thriving merchant though he had become, retained all the volubility of his former condition. He let off puns without number, knew Jeannot's rôle by heart, and was well-learned in the slang catechism. Each moment he would say, "Now you're going to laugh," but never saw his prediction realized because he was the first to laugh at his own jests, and thus took away your desire to imitate him. This rogue, as he described himself, had fastened on to us ever since the sale of the cheese, a jest, he said, which he would never forgive himself for not having invented.

"Oh, I tell you, you're going to laugh," said our little hosier, after rummaging in a small hand-bag containing his papers. "Here is a letter which was found in London in a room occupied last month by a German nobleman, tutor to Prince Louis of Prussia.\* The letter is from Her Royal Highness the Princess Anna Louisa, the young man's mother, and you shall see the style."

And our fellow-traveller handed me the Royal document, which seemed to me worthy of preservation both because of its epistolary style † and as a biographical document.

" 14 September.

" You will see from the enclosed that I have found myself obliged to send for that woman, who confessed to me that she had a daughter of fifteen with child by Master Louis, who had told her that his mother had given him leave to have a mistress, and that he would make the fortune of the mother and her daughter; adding that he had spent three weeks with her daughter during the carnival, namely at night, and that he was in arrears with her, had never given her a sol, and had left nothing behind him but the book of the operetta by Biron.

"She begged me to pay for the expense of the lying-in and the keep of her daughter, who is to lie-in within six or seven weeks. She says she wrote eight times to my son without receiving a reply.

"After taking some information, I learnt that an officer took my son to this creature and afterwards withdrew, but I cannot find out his name. He was fair and fat, whence I suppose that it was Schaek, Kolckenter or Avinsleben of the gendarmes....The last seemed to me too narrow for Louis (*the Princess was a woman who knew what to think of things*), and it is the first two with whom he is the most intimate.

"Next, my son went to the Bavarian woman, whom he has also had, and has stood under her windows talking with her,

\* The son of Prince Ferdinand of Prussia, brother to Frederic the Great. Louis was born in 1772, and was killed in 1806 at the battle of Saalfeld, by a French cavalry-sergeant.

† The execrable grammar and spelling of the French cannot be reproduced in a translation.

and has led the same kind of life as with that beggar who says she is with child by him.

"I made no other reply than that I did not pay my son's people, and that I did not know that either his father or I ever agreed that he should have a mistress (a very different thing if between ourselves I said to you that to keep him from a bad illness you could do as you thought fit), since I knew Louis was the man to glorify himself that this permission had been given him. But in any case you will not deny that it is right you should be instructed of these goings-on, lest he should fall into the gutter or into bad company; that he should not go out at night, which, in spite of the departure of the Saint-Yves woman, has taken place; and that all these dirty things have been, to which those people must have lent their hands.

"I must add that my son is so insolent, that he never obeys his father's orders nor mine, going out at night for lewdness and going to Vogilsdorfe after having in the morning accompanied Mesdames de Maldzane and de Stasse. He has had the boldness, in spite of his father's wishes and mine, to behave like a libertine and go out at night, to go alone to a *viskie*\* where he might have broken his arms and legs, to join those ladies, who shut the door without seeing him, and drinking with the officers who were there, and going back at daybreak to Berlin. This conduct disgraces his parents and you who ought to watch over his conduct, his health and the decency which the Princes should observe.

"I have hidden nothing from the Prince, telling him of all Louis' bad conduct, having taken a sacred oath to hide nothing from him, seeing that in spite of all I have done I have not been able to correct my son of his wildness, which so much influences his heart and his character that he forgets all his duties, all the obedience which he owes his parents; that he is becoming cunning, and a liar, and that it is no longer possible to trust him in anything. I shall not write to him, for it is four weeks now since I know if he exists, like his father, and I could have nothing pleasant to tell him.

"Why, if Louis has a mistress or a wench, do you not say so,

\* *Sic.* Probably a carriage driven by himself.

and let a creature come to him, instead of him running out; and as he should only consider that as a chamber-pot for his wants, as the men say (*ah! Princess!!!*)

"Health and morality are connected, and leaving a free field to health, morality suffers and makes the soul and the heart impure and wicked: of which Louis gives an example. He may be a good soldier, play the harpsichord, have wit and accomplishments; but are there not other respectable branches, very essential to fulfil, which characterize a man and his qualities of heart and soul?

"After inquiring who this woman is, it seems that Dame Engels is a woman who has played the bawd, who has kept wenches, who has sold her daughter for two louis a time to my son, and who has slept with all the officers of Gendarmes.

"I tremble at the thought of Paris and beg you to set spies and everything to work to know what Louis does; let him never go out without you, and tell the Duke that this is our wish, at least the service will oblige us. For now that Verdun and Stenay being taken, I am sure it will not be long before you are before Paris or in Paris.

"The story of this girl of fifteen is surely a piece of beggarly trickery, and I believe that the officers of the Gendarmes have used her and that they put the child down to him: that is the result of keeping bad company. I finish this disagreeable letter, and will only assure you of my perfect esteem.

"Your affectionate friend,

"ANNA LOUISA."

"Well," said our jovial hosier, when we had read this strange epistle, "don't you think that that great Princess would be able to hold her own under an umbrella in the Marché des Innocents?"

"That is what I was saying to myself," I replied, returning him his letter, "and Her Royal Highness is certainly well-informed on the subject of which she discourses so pleasantly. I don't know who was her governess; but in truth I do not believe she can have devoted much time to teaching her good manners and good grammar."

"It seems to me," whispered Julie in my ear, "that the

Landgravine of Norkitten was wrong in fearing that she would feel out of place at the Court of Berlin."

"In any case, I should not advise Her Highness to write her Memoirs in French, like the Margravine of Bayreuth." \*

In expressing her discontent in so plebeian a fashion, the Princess Anna Louisa of Prussia calumniated her son somewhat: in many respects, which she did not take into account, he was an exceedingly distinguished man, and eight or ten years later was esteemed as the eagle of the Prussian Royal Family.

In a journey which I made to Germany after I had settled down in St. Petersburg, I was charged with some commissions for this Prince, who was then at Magdeburg, his favourite residence. I will invert the order of my souvenirs for a moment, since I shall not have occasion again to mention this personage.

I waited upon him in this palace, which is situated on the parade-ground, near the cathedral in which they preserve, as though it were a trophy of victory, a boot of the famous Tilly, who was defeated in the plains of Leipzig by Gustavus Adolphus.... This boot, a mark of homage on the part of the Swedish King, did not restore to the ladies of Magdeburg all that they had lost during the sack of their city by the German general's soldiers. †

I found Prince Louis in his dressing-gown, smoking his pipe, and stretched on a sofa in his study, which gave one the impression of a museum. He was passionately devoted to pictures and statuary; and on entering this room one particularly admired a certain figure of a recumbent woman whose exquisitely proportioned form offered to the sight every physical perfection of which the fair sex is capable. even including those which the sculptors of antiquity thought proper to omit. § It was told of His Royal

\* Wilhelmina, sister to Frederic the Great.

† The sack of Magdeburg took place in the Thirty Years' War, on the 20th of May, 1631; the capture of this city was the great Imperialist general's last victory. The defeat at Leipzig occurred a few months later in the same year, and Tilly died in 1632 at Ingolstadt, of wounds contracted in battle. He was a simple, disinterested soul, had been a Jesuit in his youth, and is said to have deplored the sack of Magdeburg, which he ascribed, doubtless justly, to the orders given by Pappenheim, his subordinate.

§ This statue would seem to have been exhibited in Paris from 1818 to 1821 at the Galerie des Beaux-Arts in the Rue de Chouseul. It had probably been brought to France during the war of 1806. King Frederic William III., travelling incognito, is said to have visited and recognized it.

Highness that he used to lead the Prussian ladies before this figure whenever their virtue resisted more than usual to his tender instances; and detailing all the charms of the marble beauty which he displayed before them, he seemed in a round-about fashion to defy them to sustain the comparison. The Prince knew women well: what neither his impassioned eloquence nor their own desires had been able to effect was almost infallibly brought about by vanity.

Louis of Prussia received me very affably; he spoke to me at some length of the Court of the young Czar Alexander, who had just mounted the throne, subsequently changing the subject to General Buonaparte, then still First Consul, of whom he spoke with genuine enthusiasm.

"It is a pity," said His Royal Highness, "that that great captain should be so ambitious; I do not think it possible for Europe to remain at peace with him. You see, England has just raised the standard of war, and torn up the treaty of Amiens.... and that power will compel us to enter the lists with her, for the sake of the gold with which she bribes us poor Germans.... Monsieur Léonard, the last German Prince will have to fall on the field of battle, with an adversary like Buonaparte... unless indeed some party should rise up against him in France.... But what party?... The Royalists are all discouraged, or else chained like slaves to the First Consul's chariot.... Moreover, he knows how to stop too energetic a mouth with a gag of gold, and how to exile a head that is too clever.... I have just seen Madame de Staél in the Valais; I spent a fortnight at her place at Coppet.... What a singular woman....!" continued the Prince, with a lively transition in the tone of his voice.... "I should have fallen madly in love with her, had I only seen her at midnight, and only by the light of her wit.... But she had with her an angelic creature...." And turning his eyes to a portrait hanging over the sofa, His Highness added with a sigh, "There she is.... You have heard speak of Madame Récamier?"

"Yes, Monseigneur."

"That is her portrait.... a celestial power which would make one believe in the doctrines of the spiritualists.... a woman whose passions seem to issue from her very soul.... a divine

body in which the fire of Prometheus burns in the region of the heart alone . . . I should have gone crazy had I remained at Coppet."

The Prince went on to talk to me of St. Petersburg, of the Court of Alexander, and of some Russian ladies whom he appeared to have known intimately. Then he made me promise to come and see him before returning to Russia; I did so, and took leave of His Royal Highness.

At that time Prince Louis might have been thirty-three or thirty-four years of age. He was a gentleman of imposing stature, agreeable countenance, affable conversation, and approved courage. Prussia suffered a severe loss when his presentiment was realized and he fell upon the fields of Saalfeld, beneath the sword of a French non-commissioned officer, who had offered him his life, which he refused.

I return to the year 1793 and on board the packet which was carrying Julie and me to the Port of Ostende.

## CHAPTER XXII

The floating inns of the Low Countries—A revival of love—A sorrowful separation—A sketch of the times—Monsieur's opinion on the revolutionary excesses and the advantages which his cause may hope to derive from them.

AFTER a crossing which lasted no fewer than thirty-six hours, we touched the Flemish coast. The whole cargo of passengers spread out over the insipid town of Ostende. Early the next morning, my companion and I embarked in one of those floating hostellries which ply upon the canals communicating between Ostende and Bruges, and then to Ghent and Holland. They are curious subjects of observation, those barges in which a hundred or a hundred and fifty people are divided in different saloons, according to the price they pay for the journey. There, too, fortune has its prerogatives, and the travellers form three categories, to which correspond three various ordinaries, served at a fixed time. The first does not yield in sumptuousness to those of the best hotels in Brussels or Amsterdam; the second provides good middle-class fare; as to the third, there is no lack of quantity, but plain beef and the humble boiled potato are the only food served: between this table and the aristocratic first there is all the distance due to the difference between three livres and fifteen sous.

This was the means of locomotion which Julie begged me to adopt, in order that we might be the longer together, and I consented with all my heart.... After a life spent in the most diversified adventures—vicissitudes, opulence, distress, experiences of all kinds—the ex-dancer had become one of the most admirable and captivating women I have ever known. To see her, in her forty-second year, still so seductive, one believed in the fascinations of Nimon, who became old without ageing.

We spent more than a month in Amsterdam, after I had

finished the business which had brought me to that capital, before we spoke of parting, and even then we sought to persuade ourselves that there still remained things to be done in Holland. In this way a further six weeks passed by in a revival of love in which I had up to that time refused to believe. What I also learnt for the first time was that when old bonds are refastened they can never again be broken off.... While I write these lines (1812), Julie, who must be over sixty years of age, occupies all my thoughts; and I truly believe that if I were to meet her again, I should still be in love with her.

However, reason ended by compelling us to part. My duty called me to rejoin the Princes, and moreover there must be many letters waiting me at the different addresses I had given in Germany. Julie on her side reproached herself with having delayed so long before proceeding to Poland. "Friend Léonard," she would say, "it is no longer Delvinski's person that attracts me: our love is worn threadbare; but our two destinies seem bound to lend each other their mutual support: we were ruined together, and together we must once more tempt fickle fortune. After pleasure enjoyed in common, exertion undertaken in common is the natural consequence."

When Julie had finally made up her mind to go, "I will take ship for Dantzig," she said. "One should always hasten voyages in which one has regret and sadness for sole travelling-companions."

"And I will leave at the same time," said I, kissing her, "so as not to find sadness and regret lurking in every corner of this lodging which we have occupied together."

"You are right; after any separation, the person who suffers most is the one who remains behind."

I took Julie on board the ship which was to bear her away from me, while the horses were being put to a carriage I had purchased. The postilion was in the saddle; and the track of the ship was still visible on the surface of the sea, when my carriage was rolling along the road to Brabant.

When I reached the Royal army, it had been forced to beat a retreat. The line of the Rhine was threatened in more spots than one by those who were contemptuously called "the *carmagnoles*," and the head-quarters of the Princes were at Paderborn.

Although the outlook of the emigration was anything but favourable, I found Monsieur in great spirits.

"Our affairs are taking a good turn, Master Léonard," said His Royal Highness: "the Jacobins have triumphed over the Girondins and expelled them; the latter are retaliating, civil war is raging in Calvados\*; a heroine called Charlotte de Corday† has just stabbed Marat; and I have every reason to hope that the Mountain is about to split....Yes, I already anticipate divisions between the followers of Robespierre and the Dantonists....On the other side, Lyons is in revolt; Précy has undertaken to raise the banner of the *fleur-de-lys*; and Toulon has proclaimed my nephew Louis XVII. The name of that child would be of use to us, if only the Queen would understand the interests of the Monarchy better, and would once and for all convince herself that it is not possible to conspire in prison ....

"Egad, my dear Léonard, if I was quite free to act as I pleased, I would let things take their course until the Republic perished through its own excesses or its own follies, and the latter would probably be the most expeditious means. What is one to think, for instance, of such people as those whose frenzied pathos in favour of Robespierre I have noted down in my scrap-book:

"One 'longs to satiate his sight and his heart with his features, and with a soul electricized by his Republican virtues, to take home with him the fire with which that great man inflames the universe.'

"Another describes him as 'the incorruptible genius who sees everything, foresees everything, and baffles everything, and who is neither to be bought nor deceived.'

"A third calls him 'the fasces of all the virtues,' and writes to him, 'You who sustain the tottering country against the torrent of despotism and intrigue, you whom I only know as I know God, by his miracles, I do not know you; but you are a great man....Blessed be Robespierre, blessed be the worthy imitator of Brutus, and may the civic incense smoke upon the altar which we are raising to him.'

\* A department of Normandy, and Charlotte Corday's country.

† The prefix is rarely seen when this lady is referred to; yet she was of the noble family of Corday d'Arman.

"I turn the page," continued M. le Comte de Provence, "and I find that a delirium of ideas has passed into the language. I learn that an assassin accredited to the departments by the Mountain to slice off heads is 'a master-b..... whose decrees shall live as one of the greatest historical monuments of the revolution.' The estates of the emigrants are no longer national property: they have become 'the assignat-engraving-plate.' And the hangman has become 'the mint-master of the republic.' This is the way in which the very language is being 'sans-culottized,' as Saint-Just says—a madman of twenty-six, just escaped from school, and puffed out with his pitiful erudition, believing himself predestined to regenerate the human race by 'sans-culottizing' it.... Just listen to this school-boy: he reads in Montesquieu, whom he does not understand, that a certain people allowed itself to become corrupted by luxury, the offspring of commerce and the arts. Next he reads in Lycurgus, whom he understands still less, that a people of heroes was once formed within a circumference of a few thousand stadia.... And then see this maniac, this clumsy copyist of antiquity, without examining into questions of locality, habits or population, applying what is inapplicable, and crying to the people of France in a tone of self-sufficiency which would be comic were it not so stupid, 'It is not the happiness of Persepolis, it is that of Sparta which we have promised you!'

"I repeat, when lunatics such as that come to govern a people, the best thing is to leave them alone. The Republic will be ended still sooner because of the heads that are turned than because of those that are cut off."

## CHAPTER XXIII

I meet the famous Baron Trenck—The truth concerning his Memoirs—The adventurer's plan of campaign—He is guillotined—Revolutionary delirium—Conclusions drawn by the Comte de Provence.

M. LE COMTE D'ARTOIS rarely set up his head-quarters in the same town or village in which Monsieur fixed his. I visited His Royal Highness in a small château, about a league from Paderborn, which the Prince occupied with his principal officers. I met in his closet an old man six feet high and as dry as Voltaire was at the time when he received the nickname of Diaphane. Nevertheless, he retained a rather fine face, despite a certain shiftiness in the eyes which troubled one and repelled confidence. All modest and silent though my entrance was, it succeeded in interrupting a recital which the old giant had begun; and doubtless on this account, he cast at me a glance that was far from benevolent. I was not surprised when M. le Comte d'Artois told me that I saw before me M. le Baron de Trenck, whose marvellous Memoirs had caused all Europe to prick up its ears. "That German," said I to myself, "can pride himself upon having written a goodly number of gasconnades, and I see that, judging from my accent, he guesses that he has encountered a rival in the Princes' army."

"It is incredible, monsieur le baron, what you must have suffered during your thirty years of imprisonment," \* resumed

\* Frederic Baron Trenck was born in 1716 at Koenigsberg, and joined the Prussian army. He became the lover of the Princess Amelia, sister to Frederic the Great, who imprisoned him in 1745. He escaped to Moscow where he became the lover of a Russian Princess—he was a man of very distinguished personal beauty—and next went to Vienna, where he inherited the fortune of his cousin Francis Baron Trenck, the Pandour leader. In 1753 he again fell into Frederic's hands at Dantzig, was imprisoned for years in the citadel of Magdeburg, and treated with very revolting inhumanity. He was guillotined in 1794. The memoirs referred to were translated from German into French and published in Paris in 1788.

His Royal Highness, after welcoming me with his customary kindness, "and prodigious what you must have done to escape from captivity.... the expedients of Latude \* are nothing in comparison. But now tell me frankly if it is all true...."

"Yes, Monseigneur," replied the baron, laughing, "it is all.... prisoner's truth, which somewhat resembles travellers'."

"I thought so," replied the Prince.... "And so these almost miraculous escapes...."

"Were due to two great enchantments: gold and a woman's temperament...."

"I understand, the Princess Amelia of Prussia, who loved you...."

"Your Royal Highness ought perhaps to say, who appreciated me.... The Princess Amelia bribed the jailers lavishly to have neither eyes nor ears, and thus quite naturally removed the bars which I am supposed to have sawn through, opened out the subterranean passages which I am said to have brought about by enchantment, and placed rope-ladders against the walls which I am believed to have scaled. But Your Royal Highness will easily believe that these vulgar methods would have made but a small effect in my Memoirs; and I arranged all that in a fashion more pleasing to the taste of the public. That, Monseigneur, is the whole truth."

"And when you had succeeded in escaping?...."

"Then the Princess, in spite of the orders of her illustrious brother, raised Your Highness's servant to Royal rank and privilege, even more positively than she did Voltaire, who was obliged, it is said, to leave Berlin, lest the skin of a poet should be added to His Majesty's collection of curiosities in natural history."

"It would seem," resumed M. le Comte d'Artois, "as though Frederic the Great were very jealous of that sister...."

"More jealous than a husband, Monseigneur."

"And why?"

\* H. Mazers de Latude was imprisoned in the Bastille by Louis XV. in 1749. when he was 24 years old. His crime consisted in endeavouring to obtain the protection of Madame de Pompadour by informing her of a non-existent plot against her life. In spite of numerous and persistent efforts to escape, he spent 35 years in various prisons, the Bastille, Vincennes and Bicêtre, and was not released until 1784. After that, he published his Memoirs. He died in Paris in 1805, at the age of 80.

"Kings, mon Prince, give themselves liberal dispensations in matters of morality."

"So that His Prussian Majesty was merely getting rid of a rival, finely built as you must have been at thirty years of age...."

"And Your Royal Highness must also understand what a serious matter it is for the Princess to disobey the King's orders in this respect. Fifteen years of my life were spent in a constant succession of imprisonments and escapes. Later, Frederic II. caused me to be imprisoned through spite.... which was anything but regal conduct."

"And now, monsieur le baron," said the French Prince, with all the grace which distinguished him, "how do you come to be with our army? I believe you are attached to the troops of His Imperial and Royal Majesty."

"I am so no longer, Monseigneur. The ministers of the Empire are of the same way of thinking as the Princess Amelia: they see an officer's merit in his physical prowess, and I am nearly eighty years of age."

"But failing your arm, your head might still serve the Emperor."

"It is in that thought of Your Royal Highness's that I venture to place my hope, and I make bold to believe that if Your Highness will deign to look into this plan of campaign, you will come to the conclusion that the Baron de Trenck may be of service to the Royalist cause."

"I promise, monsieur le baron, to read it with the greatest attention, and to let you know my speedy decision."

The famous adventurer, doubtless persuaded that his plan was ensured the general assent, retired full of confidence, repeatedly bowing with the very long and already passably convex line of his vertebral column.

Not many days after this audience, I heard that Baron Trenck's plans of strategy had been examined by competent officers, and proved to be nothing more than a concatenation of fantastic tactical dreams, more than a century behind the times. The crude production was returned to the ex-favourite of the Princess Amelia, who, incensed at the small account made of his masterpiece, proceeded to France, doubtless hoping that

his military conceptions would be better received by the Republic than they had been by the Royalists. After a sojourn of some months in Paris, and despite his having donned the red cap, the old man was taken either for a spy of Coburg's, which he was not, or for an intriguer, which he had forgotten how to be, was thrown into prison, and perished on the scaffold a few days before the 9 Thermidor.

Four months sped by since my return to the Princes' headquarters, and each morning I asked myself what I was there for, without being able to find a satisfactory reply.... For I may now confess frankly, I was unable to attach an idea of unmixed satisfaction to the department of banker which had fallen to my share in the Royal army, an honour which in truth I was very far from ever soliciting.... Already more than half the capital I had brought with me from France had passed into other hands, very illustrious hands, no doubt! but nothing could seem to me less safe than this investment, and I should never have chosen it for myself. But noble borrowers abounded on every hand. All of them had known me in France; all pretended to have recommended me: the one to his sister, the other to his mistress, a third to his niece.... and of all these gentlemen I might have said:

Si j'en connais pas un, je veux être pendu.

But I did not say it, and my poor Louis continued to disappear with terrifying rapidity.

At this time, while I was sorrowing over the sad fate which made me the cashier of the emigration, with no better security than a mortgage on the mists of the Rhine, I received the most distressing news: my poor brother Vilanot had been guillotined by the revolutionaries; all my possessions were confiscated; and my theatre had become national property and was put up for sale.

Lucette, who sent me these afflicting details, had been very nearly murdered for taking my interests too warmly to heart. Fortunately she had friends on the Mountain. She escaped imprisonment, but her friends told her that, be she as pretty and witty as she might, she must abstain in future from defending the partisans of Pitt and Coburg.

Lucette's letter, which reached me by a route which the revolutionaries had not discovered, contained a highly-coloured picture of the horrors of the Revolution, and I showed it to M. le Comte d'Artois, who wiped his forehead several times as he read it, and returned it to me, saying, "This is horrible!" I next showed it to M. le Comte de Provence. His Royal Highness read it with great attention, and to my unspeakable surprise, I saw a smile on his lips the whole time.... In a few moments the Prince explained his thought to me:

"My lad," said he, according to his familiar custom, "this looks well.... yes, yes, this looks well: do not look so surprised.... A few more months of this reign of blood, and our cause is gained.... Those scoundrels are following in every detail the plan which I would have laid down for the Revolution in order to be quickest rid of it.... Soon they will have exhausted those whom they call the traitors, the tools of the tyrants; and when that is done, they will look in their own ranks for enemies to destroy. A few months ago, they only wished to expel their rivals in the Girondin faction: very soon they will commence to chop down the very branches of the revolutionary tree. You will see them cutting one another's throats; like the pelican, they will draw blood from their breasts to feed the Terror.... and then the end will come.... Yes, Léonard, if ever I ascend the Throne of France, as is probable, for my nephew will fall beneath their blows, with my niece, my sister-in-law and my sister, should it happen that any of the terrorists survive the fury of their own party, I shall salute them as they pass as the most active restorers of the French Monarchy.... We learn much from experience, friend Léonard: the foreign Powers see in us but the pretext of their ambitious rivalry with France: they wish to degrade her, not to raise us.... Have they made an effort the more since the assassination of my unhappy brother? has the Emperor of Germany organized an extraordinary levy now that the Queen, his aunt, has been transferred to the Conciergerie, that antechamber of execution?.... And the emigrants, do you think I rely on their constancy? You see for yourself, Léonard, how it has given way.... See them dispersing like partridges before the guns: some have become parasites or buffoons in the Courts of Germany, others are building chalets in

Switzerland and propose to make cheese with their own noble hands. This one paints snuff-boxes at Brunswick; that other has turned bacon-curer in Westphalia. Nay more, let the Mountain to-morrow decree an amnesty and the restitution of confiscated property, and you will forthwith behold the avengers of my brother, the upholders of my nephew, deserting, in the proportion of seven out of ten, the banner of the fleur-de-lys under which they have sworn to die....My poor Léonard, one must take men for what they are worth, and only rely upon them in so far as one recognizes in them the presence of sufficient guarantees. Now here we should require that of constancy, and as we cannot reasonably expect that from the French temperament, I much prefer to place my hopes in the scene of that frenzy which, by demolishing everything, will promptly place me in a position to build everything up again....An afflicting picture, doubtless; but though it excites in us, now, the shudder of terror, it offers us, in the near perspective, a period of calm and serenity, hidden at present behind the great storm-clouds which are bursting over France in a rain of blood....Alas! such is the eternal order of nature: it is by destruction that its works of wonder are renewed....The worm gnawing at the corpse in its coffin contributes to produce the flower glowing with youth and colour which will soon spring upon the grave. State policy deplores these fatalities; but it makes use of them to attain its end."

Thus spoke Monsieur to me at Paderborn towards the end of 1793. It was possibly such freely expressed opinions as these which gave rise to the numerous erroneous and malicious reports current at that time. There were many who believed that the Prince kept up a correspondence with Robespierre; that the dictator, amid the bloody saturnalia of the Terror, was only playing Monck to Louis Stanislas Xavier of France, and that his essential mission was promptly to efface the seventeenth of the series of Louis who have reigned over France.

## CHAPTER XXIV

Death of the Queen—How the Princes received the news—Some papers in Robespierre's handwriting seized upon the person of a French officer—Curious notes of his political opinions—A letter from a Spanish ambassador—Extraordinary details contained in it—A deputy's love-affairs—New details concerning the Queen's last moments—The trial and execution of Madame Du Barry.

TOWARDS the middle of October, we received at the Princes' head-quarters the gloomy news of the execution of the Queen, with all the details of her sublime agony. It was at this supreme moment that the dazzling halo of martyrdom spread itself over the stains cast upon the life of Marie Antoinette by an ill-guided, ill-counselled youth. They will disappear in the eyes of the nation, they will vanish from its remembrance, in commemoration of that heroic death.... unless indeed, if destiny should restore the throne to the descendants of Henri IV., they should be incited by unreflecting adherents to deeds of vengeance. That would be an unfortunate idea; for then, without having participated in the murder of the Royal victims, the nation would feel bound, not to justify it, but to bring before the tribunal of history certain unexceptionable truths which would diminish the compassion attached to the memory of Louis XVI. and Marie Antoinette. In vain would starveling writers be subsidized to declare the innocence of these august personages, whom their martyrdom has absolved: resentment would unearth their whole lives, in order to protect the nation from being judged by posterity as having countenanced an act of assassination directed against the purest innocence.

Moreover, should we ever witness the re-birth of those lilies of France whose last vestiges have at the moment of writing (1812) been devoured by Napoleon's bees, the surviving Bourbons would do well to cast a veil of forgetfulness over the murder of that angel of purity, Madame Elisabeth, and over the

mysterious end of young Louis XVII. There is a well-recognized truth which kings should always keep present before them: nations never consent for long to have wrongs attributed to them by their sovereigns.... For nations never forget that they are able when they please to take back the sceptre which they have placed in the hands of one man.

M. le Comte d'Artois felt the keenest sorrow at the news of the death of the Queen and of Madame Élisabeth. Monsieur displayed a more stoical, more resigned grief.... "I expected it," said His Royal Highness, seriously. "Events are taking the course which I foresaw."

At the moment when Louis Stanislas Xavier of France learnt the news of the death of Madame Élisabeth,\* and was perusing with moist eyes the touching details of that divine creature's last moments, they brought to His Royal Highness some papers seized on the person of a Republican officer who had been taken prisoner. The first document which the Prince opened was entirely in the handwriting of Robespierre; it was believed that the soldier on whom it was found was a relative of the celebrated revolutionary. I was permitted to take a copy of this document, as of several others; here it is:

"What is our aim?—To execute the Constitution in favour of the People.

"Who will be our enemies?—The rich and the vicious.

"Which are the means they will employ?—Calumny and hypocrisy.

"Which reason may favour the use of these means?—The ignorance of the sans-culottes.

"We must therefore enlighten the People. But what are the obstacles to the instruction of the People?—The mercenary writers who lead it astray by impudent and daily impostures.

"What other obstacle is there to the instruction of the People?—Misery.

"When therefore will the People be enlightened?—When it has bread; when the government and the rich cease to subsidize pens and tongues to deceive it; when their interest is confounded with that of the People.

\* Madame Élisabeth was murdered on the 22nd of April, 1794: the Queen on the 14th of October, 1793.

"When will their interest be confounded with that of the People?—NEVER.

"What conclusion are we to draw?—First, we must proscribe the writers, as the most dangerous enemies of the People."

On reading these words the Prince exclaimed, "You see, gentlemen, that the Republican dominion has no other methods of government than those which it calls tyranny."

"Secondly, we must distribute good literature lavishly."

"What other obstacles are there to the establishment of Liberty?—Foreign war and civil war.

"What method should we employ to terminate foreign warfare?—We should set Republican generals at the head of our armies, and punish those who have betrayed us.

"And to terminate civil war?—Punish traitors and conspirators, especially the guilty deputies and administrators; employ Patriot troops, under Patriot leaders, to subdue the Aristocrats at Lyons, Marseilles, Toulon, in the Vendée and Jura, and wherever else the standard of rebellion and Royalism has been hoisted; and finally make terrible examples of the scoundrels who have outraged liberty and spilt the blood of Patriots."

Another note in Robespierre's hand was thus conceived:

"There must be one will.... ONE ALONE; and it must be either Republican or Royalist.

"For it to be Republican, we must have Republican ministers, Republican generals, Republican deputies and a Republican government.

"Foreign warfare is a mortal disease, so long as the body politic is sick with the revolution and the division of wills.

"Internal dangers spring from the middle-class; in order to defeat the middle-class, we must rally the People. Everything was prepared to place the People under the yoke of the middle-class and to bring the defenders of the Republic to the scaffold. They triumphed at Marseilles, at Bordeaux and at Lyons. They would have triumphed in Paris but for our present revolution.

"The present revolution must continue until the necessary measures for the safety of the Republic have been taken. The people must ally itself with the Convention, and the Convention must make use of the People.

"The insurrection must spread from place to place; the sans-culottes should be paid and remain in the towns; they must be provided with arms, be stirred up and enlightened.

"Republican enthusiasm must be exalted by every possible means.

"If the deputies are dismissed, the Republic is lost. They will continue to mislead the departments, while their substitutes will be no better.

"We should form alliances with the small powers; but these will be impossible so long as we have no national will."

"If that man is seconded," said Monsieur, after reading these notes, "it may be long before we return to France. Demagogues do not fall by the excesses which cause them to be abhorred, but by the disorder that renders them vulnerable.... Now Robespierre thinks of everything, and the methods he suggests are good ones.... I should select the same, were I of his party."

Then, after glancing through another document, His Royal Highness exclaimed, "Oh, here is something concerning the late Queen, my poor sister-in-law; this explains her removal to the Conciergerie and her being brought to trial: it is an extract from a *reservado* letter from the Spanish Ambassador at Venice, Clemente de Campos, to the Duc d'Alcuida, the Spanish Foreign Minister."

"In that case," exclaimed I, in my turn, "how can it have reached Robespierre?"

"Intercepted by his agents.... or someone else," replied the Prince. And His Royal Highness read out the whole extract, of which I took a copy later, as I also did of the preceding and following extracts, in consequence of a circumstance that I will relate presently:

"Your Excellency will have learnt that on the 3rd of July the young King was separated from the Queen. The leaders



of the Marat party, who are very strong on the Committee of Public Safety, took this step unknown to the remainder of the Committee, who, having no cognizance of the measure ordered by the Marat party until after it had been carried out, dared not raise any opposition. The Royalists believe that this plan was thought of in order to give credit to the intrigues of the Queen who was every moment exposing herself to ruin, in spite of the advice which has been conveyed to her and which it is very difficult to continue to give her at present, owing to the severity and closeness with which Her Majesty is confined, this being occasioned by what I am about to tell you.

"The Commune pretend that there is in Paris an agent of the Prince of Cobourg\* who is in intelligence with the Queen; that Danton and Lacroix, who were of the Mountain party, have joined the Girondins, and that they have had conferences with Her Majesty; that this agent of Cobourg's is a cousin of General Ferraris; that he moves about freely in Paris, going from place to place on foot, for better concealment; and that on the 7th of July he left at night-time, carrying with him letters from the Queen which, in order to reach him, must have passed through the hands of a commissioner of the Temple, in whom Her Majesty thought herself able to confide. The wretched man carried them to the Commune, who took a copy of them, and it is with these documents that the Commune propose to denounce the Queen before the revolutionary tribunal. They have drawn up an indictment containing seventeen counts."

"And that," said Monsieur, with a quick, passionate gesture, "that is the cause of the resistance I encountered at Vienna when I implored the Powers to give me a position and a title which would have made my mission a worthy and fruitful one; when, by means of a definite and well-weighed policy, I might have saved my unhappy brother and the Queen herself.... This is but too true, Léonard; Marie Antoinette, by her ill-

\* Frederick Prince of Saxe-Cobourg, a general in the Austrian service. He defeated Dumouriez at Nervinde and drove him out of Belgium, but was in his turn defeated by Moreau and Jourdan and compelled to resign his command. He withdrew to his principality of Aldenhoven, where he died in 1815. His name used to be coupled in the popular execration of Republican France with that of Pitt.

advised intrigues, by that inexperience which has always presided over all the actions of her life, has undone her whole family.... for the unhappy ones who remain behind in the Temple will perish too.... unless...." Here His Royal Highness ceased; and then, resuming the extract from the Spanish Ambassador's letter, he continued to read:

"Meanwhile, on the 11th, there came the news of the dissolution of the Committee of Public Safety and of its renewal: nine of the principal followers of Marat were appointed to it; Marat himself is president and Robespierre secretary. But as fortune will have it, there is among these nine a staunch Royalist spy...."

At this moment I thought I heard His Royal Highness mutter, "Egad, I know about him...." Monsieur continued:

"I have reported to Your Excellency the liberty which I took, acting for the best, to instruct the State Inquisitors (of Venice) of Sémonville's mission.\* Neither this man nor his companions have as yet appeared. They have apparently been instructed to retrace their steps, to judge from the orders given at diverse *pódestades*. I have just been informed that Sémonville carries with him two millions' worth of diamonds stolen from the Crown Wardrobe."

"What a well-informed ambassador," said Monsieur, with a bitter smile, and continued:

"General de Salis,† who has heard of it, and who has much

\* Charles Louis Huguet, Marquis de Sémonville, was sent by the Republic as Ambassador to the Ottoman Porte, in succession to the Comte de Choiseul-Gouffier, whose intrigues with the French Princes were well-known. He travelled to Constantinople *via* Italy, and was doubtless expected to embark either at Venice or Naples. He was accompanied by Maret, later Duc de Bassano. There would seem to be no vestige of truth in the insinuation that Sémonville was the bearer of the diamonds stolen from the Wardrobe.

† Charles Ulysse de Salis, 1728–1800, filled several important offices in the Grisons Republic. He eventually arrested Sémonville and handed him over to the Austrian government who exchanged him together with other prisoners in 1795 for the daughter of Louis XVI., the future Duchesse d'Angoulême. Sémonville was a remarkable specimen of the trimmer of the good old school. After serving the Republic, he declared for Buonaparte at the 18 Brumaire and was appointed successively a Councillor of State, Ambassador to Holland, and a senator. In 1814 Louis XVIII. created him a Peer of France, and appointed him Grand Referendary of the House of Peers. He was the first incumbent of



influence in Valtellina, has advised a number of his confidential agents, mentioning to them certain defiles where they might hope to come across this rascalion and relieve him of his papers and his diamonds. The Archduke of Milan on his side is doing all he can to assist this project."

"And he succeeded," said M. le Comte de Provence. "But Señor Clemente de Campos does not know everything . . . and I am glad of it, egad! Nothing is so dangerous in important business as those officious newsmongers."

The documents seized on the person of the French officer, Robespierre's relation and doubtless his agent to the armies, included other papers worthy of attention. Monsieur glanced through them, and folded them up without communicating their contents to me; but after reading through a note that brought a smile to his lips, His Royal Highness said to me:

"Would you like to have an idea, Léonard, of the morality of your Patriot representatives and the delicacy of their amours? You can gather it from this report of one of Robespierre's agents." And the Prince read aloud:

"On the 6th of Messidor, on leaving the National Convention, the deputy Thuriot went to Number 16, Rue d'Orléans-Saint-Honoré, a furnished house. He remained there about twenty-five minutes and left at half past eight o'clock with a citizeness in a puce-coloured gown, a large shawl with a coloured border, a white skirt, and with a white handkerchief arranged upon her head in such a way as to form a kind of cap.

They went together to the Jardin Égalité,\* which they walked round three times, talking in a low voice . . . Then they turned down the avenue of limes, and there Citizen Thuriot gave a kiss to the citizeness of the Rue d'Orléans-Saint-Honoré . . . They next went to Number 163, Place Égalité, where they stood talking an instant at the door, and returned to the aforesaid Jardin Égalité, where they walked round the galleries, subsequently returning to the same Number 163, Place Égalité. There

this office, and he continued to hold it not only under Charles X. but also after the usurpation of Louis Philippe. He resigned in 1834, and died in 1839, at the age of 85.

\* Formerly the garden of the Palais-Royal.



they supped.... They went in at nine o'clock, and at eleven they had not yet been seen to come out.... We then retired, presuming that they intended to stay."

All the documents which Monsieur had read out to me on this occasion fell into my hands when the Prince had become King of France and, after setting up his Court at Verona, found himself compelled to retreat before the victorious legions of Buonaparte. He had to leave the town precipitately, as he had left Verdun in 1792; and in this case, as in the former one, the archives were left behind, and I gathered them together.

To return to this time, that is to say at the end of December 1793, I received a letter from Lucette containing harrowing details of the death of my unfortunate brother, the martyrdom of the Queen and the execution of the poor Comtesse Du Barry, together with that of the banker Vandenyver and his two sons.

"Would I could find a desert in which to spend the rest of my life," wrote Lucette. "Ah, how I regret the smiles which I have lavished on those monsters! How I hate myself for granting them my favours!.... Léonard, I have become a Royalist I think.... and yet I am not sure; for I know that among your party there are many deplorable passions too. Had this been otherwise, they would at least have saved that unhappy Queen, whom the cannibals dragged to execution in a cart after a slow agony of misery, privation and outrage.... The wretches! I have seen them laugh because one of them found her whom they used in derision to call the superb Antoinette seated on a bench in the Conciergerie mending her stockings.... But my heart melts and my pupils ache with tears when I remember that two hours before climbing the scaffold the Queen martyr, watched like a poor doe by one of those hounds of Gendarmes, was unable to obtain permission to be left alone to change her body-linen, and that she was obliged to stoop down behind her mean bedstead in order to escape the cynical gaze of her keeper.

"Madame Du Barry is less worthy of interest, no doubt, and is yet interesting because of her benevolence and the good qualities which incline one to forget the errors of her life.

She followed the Queen closely to the revolutionary tribunal: the blood of Marie Antoinette had barely dried upon the scaffold, when it was covered by that of the ex-Favourite....

"This is the story of her trial. One Georges Greyve, an inhabitant, I believe, of the village of Luciennes, fell desperately in love with the countess, who, in spite of her forty-two years, still retained her beauty and all her fascinations, as you discovered in London, my dear Léonard, to judge from reports which have reached me. The declaration which this man ventured to make to Madame Du Barry was repelled with indignation and disgust. In vain he promised her protection and safety if she would listen to him: she persisted in her refusal.

"Enraged by the resistance of the ex-Favourite, Greyve determined to ruin her. He succeeded in obtaining particulars of the sums formerly paid on Madame Du Barry's account by the banker Beaujon,\* and lost no time in carrying it to the Committee of Public Safety as a proof that the mistress of Louis XV. had squandered the State treasure. By dint of pestering the members of the Committee, Greyve ended by obtaining an order for Madame Du Barry's arrest. He consequently arrived at her house on the morning of the 22nd of September 1793, accompanied by the municipal officers of Luciennes and two Gendarmes. Seals were first affixed to all the doors; and then Greyve made the countess step into a hackney-coach, changing with her subsequently into a common cab and leaving the Gendarmes in the first carriage. The moment seemed auspicious for a renewal of his instances. He even endeavoured to force his victim, continuing to protest that by yielding she would be assured of his protection and would save all her property. There are favours," continued Lucette, "which at times we are delighted to grant, and which at other times, and under other influence, we refuse, even at the risk of every peril. Madame Du Barry, without stopping to think of the danger she was incurring, persisted in her refusal. An hour later, she was locked up at Sainte-Pélagie. Her charming seat at Luciennes was at once confiscated, with all the treasures it contained, although the hiding-place of many of these remained unknown.

\* Nicolas Beaujon was Court banker under Louis XV., and preceded the Vandenyvers. He founded the hospital called by his name in the suburb of Roule near Paris.



"But in order to ruin the countess, an act of accusation was needed. Greyve and one Héron, a retired naval officer, denounced her officially to the Committee of Public Safety, after adding to their own depositions those of a negro called Louis Bénoît Zamor, formerly in the service of the accused, and of the Jacobin Blache, to whom she had been kind in London. Upon a perusal of these documents the Committee of Public Safety ordered that Jeanne Vaubernier, Dame Du Barry, be immediately brought before the revolutionary tribunal, there to be tried as an emigrant (which she was not), and for giving assistance during her journeys to England to the enemies of the Republic.

"On the 22nd of November, the unhappy woman was brought before Dumas, vice-president of the tribunal, who submitted her to a long and searching interrogatory; and a fortnight later, on the 7th of December, Madame Du Barry and the three Vandenvyvers underwent their trial together, as participators in the same crime. All the countess's denunciators gave evidence against her: one of those who perhaps did most to insure her condemnation was Fournier, a builder and justice of the peace, who had placed the seals upon the valuable contents of the château of Luciennes. He bore witness that a number of articles of value, as well as a considerable amount of specie, had been found concealed in different rooms and in the garden. The tribunal took a deliberate note of this witness's evidence.

"The sitting ended, despite the efforts of an accomplished advocate for the defence, in the condemnation to death of Madame Du Barry. The same sentence was passed upon M. Vandenvyver and his two sons, all convicted of complicity with the enemies of the State.

"However Fournier's evidence had aroused the cupidity of those who had taken it. At the moment when the unfortunate countess was going to the scaffold, a hope of life was held out to her if she made a complete revelation of all the treasures she had hidden and of the places in which they were to be found... Jeanne Vaubernier delivered full particulars, and so soon as she had done so, a fierce voice behind her cried, 'March!'

"The details that have been gathered concerning Madame Du Barry's last moments need not surprise us in a woman whose main element was voluptuousness, and whose character was a

luxurious combination of flexibility, weakness, and love of enjoyment... However, she maintained her courage before her judges. Whether it was that she was too convinced of her innocence to dread condemnation, or that she hoped to purchase her life by the loss of all her wealth, she replied to the revolutionary tribunal with coolness, presence of mind and even a sort of firmness.

But all her resolution vanished when she perceived the fatal tumbril which was to convey her to execution, with the Messieurs Vandenyver and the Conventionnel Noël... She turned pale and livid, her features became distorted; in a few minutes she was quite unrecognizable... A few moments before, she had been a beautiful woman; now the ex-Favourite was no more than a living corpse... In vain her companions in misfortune endeavoured to give her courage; she broke down utterly and looked around her with a lacklustre gaze.... At last, at the Place Louis XV, the poor creature's mind left her entirely... She was heard to cry, 'Help! help!'... Alas! had any help come a few weeks since, to snatch a Queen of France from her executioners? When Jeanne Vaubernier had been dragged on to the scaffold, she recovered enough presence of mind to say to the executioner, in pitiful tones, 'One moment more, I beg you, monsieur...' But this last word was drowned in the flood of blood that suddenly inundated the beautiful neck in which had nestled the kisses of a king."\*

\* The following ingenious defence by the author of the recently published *Life and Times of Madame du Barry* is worth quoting here: "The difficulty of pleasing everybody," says Mr. Douglas, "was recognized thousands of years before the fable of the Old Man and his Ass was ever penned. If Du Barry had died with a scornful smile upon her lips, we should just as certainly have heard that a long career of vice had blunted, if not destroyed, her conscience, and that she showed as cynical an indifference to death as she had always done to virtue or religion.... If Du Barry showed cowardice in her last moments, there were physical reasons for it, and there were no moral motives to make her brave. She had not, as Marie Antoinette had, the pride of race, the scorn of outraged dignity, or the poignancy of sorrow; or like Charlotte Corday, or Madame Roland, the sense of being a martyr for a cause she deemed holy. On the other hand, she was a woman in magnificent health, strong and active of body, and of no great mental power—in short, a healthy animal. Under ordinary circumstances she would no doubt have lived for another twenty-five or thirty years... It was as natural for her to struggle for life as it is for the bird to peck at the hand that comes to take it out of the trap."

## CHAPTER XXV

The situation of France and the armies—The plight of the emigration—Events in Poland in 1794—Kosciuszko and Count and Countess Delvinski—A military decoration on a woman's breast—The two fugitives—A conversation on politics and a narrative—Departure for Italy—Separation.

PASSING over a period of about eighteen months, which had no influence upon my destinies except in so far as they diminished my pecuniary resources, I come to the year 1795. At that time great events had been accomplished in Europe. The Reign of Terror in Paris had come to an end; the violent measures of Thermidor had swept from the Mountain the reptiles that hissed upon its summit, and had regenerated the Convention and brought to the front the better-minded members of that assembly. The victory of Fleurus\* had opened to the French troops a road towards Belgium, which they had followed up by entirely reconquering that country. The capture of Maastricht had delivered the entrance to revolutionary Holland to the Republican legions, who kicked over the half-throne of the stadholders and founded a Batavian Republic which was tolerably well received by the Dutchmen. The Duke of York, the defender of that country, had found a very opportune place of refuge in his ships. The Batavian Republic was preparing to sign articles of peace with the French,† as was also the King of Prussia. In the West, Charette § and his brave Vendéans were submitting;

\* 26 June 1794 (8 Messidor Year II). General Jourdan, commanding the army of the Sambre-et-Meuse, defeated the Imperialists under Coburg. This was the third battle fought at Fleurus, a little town some seven miles from Charleroi. The fourth and last, in which Napoleon routed Blücher, is better known as the Battle of Ligny.

† The wave of republicanism (in the French sense) that swept over the people of Holland was of the most transient. Before then, and since, the mass of the nation has always sided with the aristocracy in a deep-rooted affection for the House of Orange; and political dissent is only to be found among the trading or middle class.

§ François Athanase Charette de la Contrie was born at Couffé in Brittany in

Stofflet\* and his Chouans† were fleeing before the Republicans, in spite of the general's personal intrepidity and devotion.... Moreover the defeat of Quiberon left little hope to the Royalist bands, which had not yet seen Louis XVIII.'s proclamation.‡

The Rhine was crossed in every part by the French. Jourdan and the army of Sambre-et-Meuse and Moreau with the army of Rhin-et-Moselle were advancing by forced marches towards the Danube. No part of the emigration could find shelter and safety in Germany. The soldiers of the Emperor agreed as little with the noble volunteers of the Royalist army as did that Sovereign's generals with the French commanders. At one time the Archduke Charles and General Wurmser had hoped to be able to combine with the Prince de Condé in their operations for marching on Paris, after purchasing the defection, first of Pichegru and then of Moreau; but the vain pretensions of His Serene Highness, who insisted upon points of precedence with the foreign armies, dissipated all the hopes to which this combination had given rise.... Monsieur, who after the death of Louis

1763, and became a lieutenant in the navy. In 1793 he placed himself at the head of the Vendéan peasants of Machecoul in Poitou, and together with Cathelineau took part in the sieges of Nantes and Luçon, both of which ended fatally for the Royalist cause. Discord broke out between the Royalist chiefs, and Charette, with his division, left the army. After he was reduced to fighting alone, he performed a fine feat of arms in the capture of the Republican camp at Saint-Christophe, near Challans, in 1794. In 1796 his feeble forces were entirely destroyed by General Hoche; he himself was taken prisoner and shot at Nantes.

\* Nicolas Stofflet was born at Lunéville in 1751, and served as a private in the army for 15 years. In 1793 he joined the Royalists in the Vendée, distinguished himself in a number of engagements, and eventually, at the death of La Rochejacquelain, became general of the Royalist troops. He also had his differences with Charette, and ended by making peace with the Convention upon fairly good conditions. At the instigation of the Comte d'Artois' agents, however he took up arms again in 1796. This time he was taken, and shot at Angers. Louis XVIII. had conferred upon him the rank of lieutenant-general.

† Chouans was the name given during the wars of the Vendée to the peasants of Brittany and Bas-Maine who waged a guerilla warfare for the King. Gradually the term was applied to all the Vendéans. They were so called after their first leader, Jean Cottereau, nicknamed *le Chouan (chat-huant, hooting-cat)* from the cat-call which was the rallying-cry of his followers. Cottereau, a cobbler of Laval, first organized the Chouans in 1792. He was slain in an encounter with the Republican troops in 1794.

§ 27 June 1795. A troop of emigrants, commanded by d'Herville and Puisaye had disembarked and seized Fort Penthièvre; but they were hemmed in upon the peninsula by Hoche and utterly beaten. The Comte d'Herville was mortally wounded and conveyed back to London, where he died. As to the Comte de Puisaye, he has been too generally accused of treachery upon this occasion to leave much doubt on the matter. He returned to England, became naturalized, and expired at Hammersmith in great poverty in 1827. His justificatory *Mémoirs* were published in London in 1803.



XVII.\* had proclaimed himself King of France and Navarre as Louis XVIII., had sought refuge in Italy. His Court was established at Verona, while Charles Philippe of France wandered to and fro between Germany and England, and from the latter country to the islands adjacent to the theatre of war in Brittany, upon which His Royal Highness could never make up his mind to descend.

Before following the King to Italy, I must make a short mention of an event which had just taken place in Northern Europe and in which my friend of twenty-four years' standing had played an amazon's part, following in the footsteps of Count Delvinski, who had become her husband under the banner of the insurrection.

The march of the French legions towards the Elbe and the Danube had suddenly revived the hopes of the Poles, whose nationality had become no more than an empty word, a shadow, which the Empress Catherine II. permitted this people, struck out from the roll of the Powers, to caress. But the horror of their enthralment was fomenting in every Polish heart; the despotism of the Czarina had subjugated but not subdued them... They waited for events.... And when the standard of a republic floated in the very heart of Germany, when they beheld the soldiers of liberty marching along unimpeded, they said, "Let us rise, we shall be seconded." And suddenly a strong man, a man of Scythian resolution, a heart bronzed with patriotism rose from the crowd and said to the Poles, "Let us march against the troops of Catherine and make them feel the claws of the white eagle †." This man was Kosciuszko, the former comrade of Washington, § one of the defenders of Polish liberty at the time when the powers were loading it beneath their yoke. And when the insurgents had by acclamation proclaimed Kosciuszko for their leader, a soldier still young, but proved in the fight of his country against her oppressors, issued from the ranks, and said, "General, take me for your aide-de-camp." It was Delvinski. \*\* "Count," replied the hero of Du-

\* 8 June, 1795.

† The Polish emblem. *Vide supra*, p. 160.

§ Kosciuszko served as Washington's adjutant during the so-called War of Independence.

\*\* The original editor here appends a foot-note saying, "We here inform our readers, somewhat late in the day, that this name, conceals that of a Polish nobleman who played an important part in the wars of Europe. The adventu-

bieka,\* "you shall not be my aide-de-camp but my second in command. Your modesty has prevented you from suspecting that I have already thought of you."

Julie was standing by Delvinski's side. Kosciuszko's experienced eye divined her sex beneath her lancer's uniform. The general smiled upon her with all the affability which his austere and swarthy features were capable of reflecting, and said, "It is well, madame. In the great needs of the country, there is no such term as woman; and I like to see your sex foreswear its weakness in the hour of danger."

"General," replied Julie, "I thank God I have none to foreswear."

"Forgive me, madame: one naturally expects to find a woman's character in one who possesses all a woman's charms."

It was not without cause that the Polish insurgents hoped that the march of the French troops might assist their struggle for liberty. It was evident that this invasion, at the very moment when Catherine II. was preparing to march her troops into Poland, must needs disquiet her generals, and that the Empress would be compelled to detach at least a portion of her army, not so much to protect her own states, which had nothing to fear from the Republicans of the South, as to fulfil her obligations towards the Emperor and England; and this diversion could not but be favourable to the Poles.

A tacit alliance was accordingly concluded between the democratic Republic on the Seine and the Oligarchy on the Vistula, despite the vast disagreement between the principles of the two countries. But such was always the fate of the unhappy Poles. Ever since the first dismemberment of their stormy Monarchy, they were unable to form with the powers any but the most

rous circumstances which were mingled with his more warlike exploits, circumstances faithfully related in the preceding chapters, forbid us to name him more fully." The present editor suggests that the portrait is intended for Prince Joseph Poniatowski, the nephew of Stanislas II. The dates tally with fair correctness. Poniatowski was born in Warsaw in 1763, began by serving in the Austrian army, returned to Poland in 1789, commanded the Polish troops in 1792, and meeting with opposition from the Diet in each of his operations, left Poland and did not return until 1794. He then took service under Kosciuszko, but was again obliged to expatriate himself. He was known as the "Polish Bayard," and was of a romantic temperament. On the other hand, as Poniatowski drowned himself in the Elster in 1813, there is no reason why he should not have been named in the *Souvenirs de Léonard* in 1838.

\* 1792. Here Kosciuszko served under Poniatowski, who was then commanding in chief, as stated above.

monstrous alliances, which cost them torrents of blood without bringing them the slightest political advantage.

Nevertheless Kosciuszko soon succeeded in bringing together some fifty thousand men under his command. The fortune of war was at first in his favour; he defeated the Russian columns in engagement upon engagement; Delvinski, fighting under the orders of the generalissimo, covered himself with glory, which was frequently shared by Julie, whose hand, which had formerly found the garlands of the Opera too heavy a weight to carry, now treated a sword stained with the blood of the enemy as the most trifling plaything. I eagerly followed in the newspapers the exploits of a woman whom I had formerly loved with passion, and whom I now loved with pride. One day my heart leaped with joy on reading that the Countess Delvinski, after taking a Russian colonel prisoner with her own hand, had received the Cross of the White Eagle from Kosciuszko.

But it was not long before I read the details of the sanguinary battle of Macijovice, where the brave Poles had been cut to pieces by the united armies of Count Fersen and General Souvaroff....\*

Kosciuszko, covered with wounds, was picked up almost lifeless on the battle-field and taken to Russia, where Catherine plunged him into a dungeon in the fortress of Schlusselburg.† It is probable that the Empress would never have forgiven the Polish general for his attempts to conquer the liberty of his fellow-countrymen, and that he would have died in prison; but the Czarina herself died within thirteen months of the Battle of Macijovice, and Paul I., more appreciative of nobility of character, gave Kosciuszko his liberty.‡

Delvinski and Julie were both wounded, and were furiously

\* Paul Alexis Vasilievitch Count Souvaroff, a brilliant and most inhuman general. After his victory at Macijovice he entered Warsaw; but first made a terrible massacre of the inhabitants of Praga, on the opposite bank of the Vistula. From this massacre the population has not to this day recovered: and Praga is a place of much less importance than it was in 1794. After a very victorious career, Souvaroff was at last defeated by Massena in 1799. He was recalled to St. Petersburg and died in disgrace (it is said of discontent) in 1800. He was then seventy years of age.

† On Lake Ladoga, 20 miles from St. Petersburg; the same prison in which the Czar Ivan VI. was detained from his dethronement in 1741 until his death in 1765.

‡ He died at Soleure in Switzerland on the 15th of October, 1817. He was fifty-one years old.

pursued by the Cossacks. They were, however, better mounted than their pursuers, and succeeded in escaping at night-fall.

One spring evening in 1795 I was preparing to leave the town of Augsburg, in which I had sought refuge in order to travel to Italy, *via* the Tyrol, and rejoin H. M. Louis XVIII. at Verona. It was about nine o'clock when a knock came at the door of the Grape Inn, where I was staying; I opened the door myself, and recognized . . . Count and Countess Delvinski.

"Yes, it is we," said Julie, throwing her arms round my neck, "two Polish insurgents, defeated and fugitive. Fortune has deserted our banners, and we have come to you for assistance, my old friend. For France alone can offer us an asylum, and we have not the means to get there."

"Julie reckons too much on your friendship, M. Léonard," said the count, looking at me somewhat distrustfully. "The cause which you serve does not permit you to succour the defenders of a people."

"The countess has shown more judgment than you, general," I replied, giving Delvinski my hand: "friendship has no political opinions; I will assist you if needs be at the risk of my life. But you have nothing to fear in this town; it is the common refuge of all parties. Augsburg shelters emigrants, patriots, Royalist and Republican agents alike. All of these intrigue, each on his own behalf, with the assistance of the Jews, who are very numerous here, and who recognizing no master except gold, serve with equal zeal all the dispensers of that metal."

"But we have none," said the count, shaking his head, "and . . ."

"Léonard has," interrupted Julie briskly.

"And that is sufficient," I added, in my most obliging affirmative, "but not for to-night. You look very much fatigued, and I must first see to your supper and your lodging for the night..."

"You are taking a terrible responsibility upon yourself, my friend," said the countess, letting herself fall upon an ottoman with all the languor of a person worn out with fatigue; "if your lawful King came to know that you had succoured two Polish insurgents who, to crown their infamy, are on their way to France to serve the Republic, your credit with His Majesty would be seriously compromised."

"It would be more correct, countess, to say His Majesty's credit with me...."

The count gave me a look of surprise, as he sat down by Julie's side.

"I understand what Léonard means," said she, with a smile. "Credit is a thing accorded to him who borrows by him who lends, and it is this latter part which our friend plays at the Court of the King of France and Navarre.... Ah, but when the army of the Princes, and the Austrians, and the Russians (who will now come on a little faster since there are no Poles left for them to fight), when all these have passed over the bodies of the little "carmagnoles" of the Republic, the King will make a great man of you, and you see how great a reliance I must place in your friendship to come and ask you for the means to go to the assistance of His Majesty's enemies and thus retard your reward."

"As you know, dear countess, the principal bond which attached me to the Royal cause is broken...."

"Ah yes, that was a sacred cause," said Julie, with emotion.... "Poor Queen, you owed her all your devotion, and you served her faithfully too. Had all the world acted as you did, Marie Antoinette would be still living. As to the others...."

"I serve them through a sort of infatuation for which I have never been able to account, and for which nevertheless I have already been prettily punished by the Republic.... I have nothing left in France."

"We are going there, Monsieur Léonard," said the count, with persuasive frankness; "you will have two friends there at least, and in the courts of the Revolution friendship is seldom barren."

During this interview the people of the inn had laid the visitors' supper. I saw these Germans cast curious looks upon my guests: they clearly could not conceive how I, who stood high in their consideration, thanks to the lavishness of my expenditure and the dignity of my travelling-equipage, could find myself upon terms of intimacy with two poor devils whose boots covered with dust and holes, whose worn and ragged clothing proclaimed poverty and a long journey on foot.... Two or three "monsieur le comtes" which I purposely uttered

during supper made my friendly relations with the newcomers seem more natural in the eyes of these worthy Augsburgers.

When we were once more alone, Delvinski related to me how, in order to reach Augsburg along a thousand by-ways and with infinite difficulties, he and the countess had been compelled to sell their horses and arms to the Jews, who according to their custom had bought all this after the fashion in which the ingenuous Israelites always buy from those in need, that is to say for nothing ; how they had barely sufficient money to bring them to Augsburg ; and how he, a general of the Polish army, had often had to share a scanty piece of bread with Colonel Niebert....

"Yes, my friend," said the countess gaily, "you can hardly have expected, when you saw me in London twisting between my nimble fingers a rose or jasmine-stalk, that in three years time I should have conquered, dearly upon my word, the full grade of colonel on the field of battle. Such a thing would generally be looked for only in a romance ; but revolutions, my dear Léonard, compose more wonderful romances than any novelist."

My friends' arrival delayed my departure by some days. Both the count and countess stood in need of rest, and meantime I was making enquiries as to the safest means to get them into France without risk of being apprehended.... The result of my investigations went to show that it was almost impossible to cross the frontier on the German side without being regarded either as a spy or as an emigrant trying to penetrate into the territory of the Republic in order to betray it. Undoubtedly the Polish refugees had a prompt and ready explanation to offer ; but the representatives of the people attached to the army were not always disposed to listen to "suspects," whom they had a way of provisionally shooting, by express order of the pro-consuls.

I learnt on the other hand that in the army of Italy, which was stationed in the Genoese Riviera, the Republican forms were less severe, because Lombardy and the small Italian republics, with the exception of Venice, showed but little favour to the cause of the King. It was decided that the count and countess should travel across the Tyrol with me ; we would then separate

in Italy, they to join the French army, I to rejoin the Court of Louis XVIII. at Verona.

We left Augsburg after my friends had enjoyed a week's rest. Let me say here, to satisfy the conscience of the scrupulous, that during this week Julie was nothing more to me than Colonel Niebert, pure and simple; I exercised the duties of hospitality nobly and conscientiously. No equivocal word passed between the countess and myself; not the shade of a remembrance was uttered concerning our stay in Holland: the rights of Hymen were amply respected.... My generosity was free from the smallest stain of self-interest, and I inscribe in fine white letters upon the records of my life the assistance accorded by Léonard the Royalist to the revolted Poles about to volunteer into the armies of the French Republic. Nevertheless, when I rejoined the King, I made no boast in his presence of what I had done for Count and Countess Delvinski.

We arrived at Genoa, a mart of all the merchandise and all the opinions of Europe. There we found soft-spoken Italians who lisped offers, in the *Zenese* tongue in my friends' ears to lead them to the French outposts, without any risk, across the marble rocks which line the gulf. They confided themselves to the care of these guides, and prepared to take leave of me. I could only induce the count to accept a very insignificant sum from me. "We are becoming Republicans," said he, refusing several rolls of louis d'or which I had offered him: "we must limit our requirements." In this respect many of the emigrants had furnished me with very substantial proofs that they, on the contrary, were Monarchists.... The count and countess left me with every assurance of gratitude; I did not see them again until 1814.

## CHAPTER XXVI

The Court of Louis XVIII. at Verona—Letters patent written at the end of the eighteenth century in the style of the sixteenth—A Latin epitaph composed by Louis XVIII.—The biography of His Majesty's aunts—The King cleverly leads up to a request for money.

I FOUND Louis XVIII. organizing his Court at Verona, and appointing his ambassadors. Kings have their favourite weakness, their "hobby," as Sterne calls it, just as other men. The hobby of the exiled King was to sit upon a throne, no matter where, and in despite of the circumstances which prevented him from erecting his throne upon the only soil where it was good for anything. When waiting upon the King, one was struck with the saddening contrast between his sovereign grandeur and the extreme modesty of his Household. The descendant of Henri IV. occupied part only of an ancient building called a palace, by a strange abuse of the word; \* worm-eaten furniture, worn-out arm-chairs in faded red velvet, with their horsehair stuffing escaping at the corners; a few footmen clad in patched and threadbare Royal liveries; two or three hungry-looking officers, in shiny uniforms and boots very much down-at-heel, walking up and down a dismantled anteroom in the quality of Noble Guards; a kitchen which remained calm and cold even at midday: such was the painful situation of the Court at Verona. All this was due to the habitual negligence with which His Majesty's Royal Allies discharged the pension which they allowed him, and in which Austria took no part, since she refused even to acknowledge Louis Stanislas Xavier as King of France.

The first time I saw the King, he was personally drafting

\* It is no more an abuse of the word to call a private house a *palazzo* in Italy than an *hôtel* in France!

one of the first acts emanating from his newly-acquired Royalty : letters patent, in the carefully preserved style of the sixteenth century, granting his favourite the Comte d'Avaray the right, so often solicited in vain by the greatest lords in the Kingdom, to bear the fleur-de-lys in his arms.

His Majesty held me a long and very eloquent discourse on this subject and upon the gratitude due from kings to their faithful servants ; and with a copious assistance of Latin quotations, which I had the misfortune not to understand, the King proved to me that his favourite was the one of all his subjects who had shown him the most devotion, especially on the occasion of the stealthy departure which His Majesty described as his escape from the "prison" of the Luxembourg. This event had not occurred so long ago that I was able to agree with the King ; I clearly recollect that his journey from Paris to Coblenz had been effected very freely, without the slightest obstacle, and that the only calamity which His Royal Highness had encountered on the road consisted in his having to sup on roast veal instead of rich game : an inconvenience which history will never admit within the category of an alarming catastrophe. Nevertheless, this was the reason most explicitly expressed in the letters patent despatched to M.<sup>e</sup> le Comte d'Avaray ; and it was also one of the principal reasons which later procured him the title of duke, as is recalled in that nobleman's Latin epitaph, composed by the King's own pen. \*

\* Here the original editor appends the following very wise and sensible foot-note : "Despite the interest which the reader may take in this epitaph, we thought it right, in order not to delay Léonard's narrative, to make it the subject of a note. Here is this tombstone composition, and the translation which His Majesty made of it himself."

The present editor proposes to go further, and to omit the translation. Here then follows the "tombstone composition":

D.O.M.

HIC JACET

NOBILIS VIR

ANTONIUS LUDOVICUS FRANCISCUS

DE BEZIADE,

DUX D'AVARAY,

PAR FRANCIE,

EQUITUM REGIS CUSTODUM UNUS ET PRAEFECTIS.

AB ANTIQUA STIRPE ORIENDUS

BELLI TIROCINIUM,

GIBRALTARIÆ SUB MÆNIBUS ALTIS



While the Most Christian King was according to M. le Comte d'Avaray the most splendid testimonials of his gratitude for having resigned himself to eat roast veal in His Majesty's company on the road from Paris to Coblenz (see the account of this journey written by the King himself), His Majesty stood in great need of some one who would establish a claim to his gratitude for less delicate but no less real reasons, in other words by lending him a little money to enable him to warm his kitchen upon occasions and to assist his Noble Guards to have their boots soled and heeled. I knew that there was nothing more glorious than to pour out one's louis d'or in the service of the Monarchy; but I had already poured out a good many in this direction; and I had privately made up my mind at least

MEDIOS PER IGNES  
GESSIT.  
PATRIA SUBVERSA  
DEO, REGI FIDELIS.  
LUDOVICO XVIII  
(HEU! QUARE LUDOVICO XVI NON ADFUIT?)  
E CARCERE EREPTO,  
AB EO GALLICIS LILIIS IN SCUTO DONATUS,  
VIGINTIQUE ANNOS SECRETIORIBUS IN CONSILIIS  
ADMISSUS.  
REGEM AMICUM ADEO DILEXIT,  
UT SANCTOS EMICITIA NEXUS,  
NE MINIMA QUIDEM ADULATIONE  
UNQUAM FOEDARET  
AERUMNAS. VARIOQUE LABORES  
CORPORE, MENTE NIMIS IMPARE  
NON SUSTINENTE  
MORTEM A LONGE VENIENTEM  
IMPAVIDUS ASPEXIT.  
ULTIMES TANDEM ECCLESIAE AUXILIIS MUNITUS  
SUPREMISQUE VERBIS, INIMICIS SUIS  
VENIAM DANS  
OBDORMIVIT IN DOMINO,  
DIE III JUNII MENSIS, ANNO SALUTIS MDCCXI  
AETATIS VERO SUA LIII.  
QUI IGNOVIT, IGNOSCAT EI DEUS  
PRECARE VIATOR.  
HUNC LAPIDEM  
LUDOVICUS XVIII REX CHRISTIANISSIMUS  
GRATITUDINIS PIGNUS  
MCFRENS POSUIT.



to wait in future until I was asked for the loans which I had formerly proffered of my own accord.... I am able to declare to-day (1815) that I was in no way the gainer by this change of attitude. So many vicissitudes have passed over the lives of the King and his august brother that they have just as little kept an exact note of the money for which they asked me as of that which I offered them.

For the rest, I had so intimately identified myself with the Royalist cause that I did not see how I could without disgrace separate myself from it. Things were taking such a turn at the close of 1795 that it seemed to me very unlikely that Louis XVIII. would be able to move his Court to Versailles in the near future, and my ruin appeared to me to be not far off. Not that this greatly alarmed me. I had allowed myself to be seduced by Julie's philosophy, and I said to myself, "Well! when I have exhausted my last resources, I will stoically turn my steps back to their origin: I will go to St. Petersburg, where the fine manners and the curls of the reign of Louis XV. have taken refuge, and there resume my comb."

One evening, the King deigned to display towards me the most charming familiarity, and was pleased that I should assist alone at his couchee. All who have known Louis XVIII. well will remember that it was his habit to prepare with infinite art the subject to which he desired to call attention; and when this subject was his own person, one of his favourite methods was to throw up the latter into relief by drawing a parallel in which others were ordinarily very badly treated.

"The late Queen, my sister-in-law," said Louis XVIII. to me that evening, "sometimes opened her mind to you, Léonard, on the subject of her likes and dislikes. I will wager that she told you more than once that she disliked me."

"Never, Sire."

"And yet it is true that the Queen had an aversion for me, and I will tell you the reason: I clearly saw that she had been instructed by her mother, the Empress Maria Theresa, to annul our credit, the credit of us Princes of the Blood, as far as she was able; and you will agree, Léonard, that Her Majesty acquitted herself with tolerable thoroughness of the instructions which she had received.

"Ah, I had many a lance to break in my youth, and my precocious reason earned me many a rebuff. For instance, the Princesses my aunts bore me no love, because I often uttered ideas and opinions diametrically at variance with theirs, which were rarely noted for common-sense. I waged war joyously too upon their absurdities, and this in no way contributed to win me their affection; and yet, in truth, there was often more reason for my spite than for their annoyance.

"The education of my aunts was at first very much neglected. The nuns at Fontrevault,\* to whom Louis XV. had entrusted them, as they interfered with his pleasures, taught them nothing at all: Madame Louise did not know her letters at twelve years of age. This Princess was gay, careless and fond of amusement; and I am inclined to think that, following the example of the Duchesse de Longueville,† it was not the innocent amusements that attracted her the most. Madame Louise hunted the deer like a whipper-in, in fact in this pastime she rivalled her father; nor was she behindhand with him in the dexterity with which she could toss off a flagon of delicate wine. There has been much speculation concerning the motives which induced Madame Louise suddenly to join the Carmelites, at the age of twenty-three: she has even been suspected of having had love disappointments and even repentance... However that may be, Her Royal Highness took the veil in 1770. It was presented to her, by her desire, by the Dauphiness Marie Antoinette; and she adopted the name of Sister Theresa of St. Augustine.

"On her death-bed she seems to have remembered her rank, for her last words were, 'To Paradise, quick, quick, at full speed,' absolutely as in the days of her worldly life she might

\* A Benedictine monastery nine miles from Saumur, founded in the eleventh century, containing both monks and nuns, and always governed by an abbes. The community was broken up in 1804 and the abbey transformed into a penitentiary. This it still remains.

† Anne Geneviève de Bourbon-Condé, the sister of the Grand-Condé and of the Prince de Conti, was born in 1619, and was remarkable for her beauty, her grace and her wit. She devoted herself heart and soul to both political and amorous intrigue, and numbered among her lovers Turenne and La Rochefoucauld (then Prince de Marsillac), both of whom she succeeded in embroiling with the Court. The latter composed the following impious verses in her honour:

Pour mériter son cœur, pour plaire à ses beaux yeux,

J'ai fait la guerre aux rois, je l'aurais faite aux dieux.

Her plots were defeated by Cardinal Mazarin, and in her ill humour and political impotence she withdrew from the world. She died in 1679, at the Carmelite convent in the Faubourg Saint-Jacques.



have said, 'To the Opera, and don't spare the horses'. I do not know to which coachman Sister Theresa of St. Augustine fancied herself in her last moments to be giving her orders.

"Madame Adélaïde, the eldest of the Princesses, was impious, violent and obstinate beyond description. Here is an incident which I witnessed one day when I had gone to see Mesdames at their convent. The dancing-master mentioned to them before me a new minuet, known as the Rose-coloured Minuet.

"'I should like to learn it,' said Madame Adélaïde, 'but I want it called the Blue Minuet.'

"'Your Royal Highness's wishes,' replied the dancing-master, laughing, 'cannot alter that: it is only known in society by the name of the Rose-coloured Minuet.'

"'Yes, but when the daughter of a King wished a thing...'

"'I will agree, if Your Highness pleases, that blue is a more agreeable colour than rose; but I should be laughed at if I spoke to my pupils of a Blue Minuet.'

"'Blue! blue!' cried Madame Adélaïde, purple with anger, and stamping her foot on the floor.

"'Rose! rose!' replied the master.

"'In that case I will not dance...'

"'I appeal,' retorted the professor, 'to the members of the community present.'

"'Very well,' said the Princess, 'so be it.'

"The nuns as you may imagine, agreed with my Aunt Adélaïde: the minuet was rechristened, and Madame danced it.

"On her return to Court, the violence of Madame Adélaïde's character was further displayed in her tastes. She insisted on being taught to play on every musical instrument, from the horn to the Jew's harp. I, little princeling that I was at the time, used to laugh at her when I saw her puffing out her cheeks like Boreas to blow down a copper tube, or imitating a shoe-black as she played upon her vulgar jew's-harp. At the same time she took lessons in Italian, English, mathematics, watch-making and turning; and of all this she never knew the least thing, as I had very respectfully prophesied to her, to her great annoyance. Madame Adélaïde was absolutely without gentleness in her character: her brusque manners, her harsh

voice and her quick way of speaking made one almost afraid to converse with her. She carried her idea of the prerogatives of her rank to a pitch of folly. One of her chaplains one day said, '*Dominus vobiscum*' in her presence a little carelessly; whereupon she rudely apostrophized him as soon as mass was over, and told him to remember that he was not a bishop yet, and to refrain from officiating as though he were a prelate. I overheard this remark, shrugged my shoulders and gave a little skip: my aunt never forgave me that skip! Through taking an inordinate amount of exercise, Madame Adélaïde succeeded in destroying at an early age the charms with which nature had favoured her, and her frequent fits of impatience, mingled with anger and irritation, ended by destroying her beauty at an age when women most enjoy that charming gift.

"Madame Victoire was a very nervous child, and the nuns of Fontrevault almost drove her mad by sending her to say her prayers in a cellar in which their predecessors were all buried. She was a kind-hearted excellent creature, but she always remained timid in the world, as she had been in the catacombs at Fontrevault. Madame Victoire's graciousness, her gentle look, her winning smile were but the all too pale reflections of a mind devoid of energy, a heart without elasticity.... This Princess lacked the spark which completes life and is called love: she lacked it, because she refused to accept it from any but a crowned head; and so Madame Victoire, for want of becoming a queen, never became quite a woman.... And yet I saw her grow excited one day, and this was in a movement of impatience with me, who had said something of that kind to her.... My Aunt Victoire had gathered round her a society of ladies as modest as herself, who knew how to fall in with her stay-at-home inclination; for the worthy Princess delighted in idleness. She punctiliously fulfilled all the duties of religion, but without ever leaving her apartments: one might say that she sought salvation in an easy-chair, at least if salvation is compatible with a love of good eating, the only sensuality which she permitted herself, the only one, I believe, she had ever known.

"Madame Sophie had the frightened timidity of the squirrel; she walked at an extraordinarily fast rate, never looked at a

person except sideways, like a hare, and ran away so soon as she suspected that anyone wished to speak to her. True, my Aunt Sophie was able to flatter herself with being the ugliest woman at Court.

"When I grew a little older, I confess I began to criticize with some spitefulness all these faults and eccentricities which had nothing Royal about them. My aunts were very angry with me for it, and yet I was right. They, the Queen, my brother d'Artois and even the King used to accuse me of pedantry, when I only prided myself upon displaying dignity.

"Dignity," seriously continued the King, "is perhaps the quality with which a sovereign is least able to dispense; it atones for many failings, and nothing is better fitted to bring out his other qualities. If God permits me one day to return to my Realms, I hope to prove to the French people that I possess all the conditions for the want of which the Revolution broke out. Shall I tell you my whole thought, Léonard? I believe that in me there is more of the stuff which kings are made of than in all the rest of my family put together.

"Ah, if only I had been better supported," continued Louis XVIII., with a sigh, "what a deal of good I might have done in France, what a deal of evil I might have prevented! But the Croesuses of the emigration have deserted me; they prefer to remain in England.... One d'A.... lends out in petty usury the gold which he has brought away from France. I have found among my nobility a sordid egoism, where I expected to find unlimited devotion. Is it not a disgrace to all those nobles, whose resources are well known to me, that they should allow themselves to be forestalled by you, Léonard, in advances to the Crown, which they could themselves have made without the least difficulty?"

"Sire," I interrupted, eagerly, "I have always made these advances with equal pride and satisfaction."

"Egad, I know it, my lad," replied His Majesty, delighted that I should give him the opportunity of attaining his object at one bound; "and at this same moment, when my returns have been a little delayed, I am sure that you will gladly hand d'Avaray five hundred louis which it is absolutely necessary that I should have."

"Your Majesty does me honour by relying upon my eagerness to meet your wishes."

I vow these words issued with some difficulty from my chest: my heart was so big as almost entirely to fill it.

"That is fine of you, Léonard," said Louis XVIII., giving me, upon my word, his Royal hand. "I expected as much from you."

"I should have been better pleased," said I to myself, "had His Majesty expected less."

I hope you will agree that the King of France and Navarre was marvellously clever in leading up to a delicate request.

## CHAPTER XXVII

Louis XVIII. joins Condé's army—Regiments *pour rire*—The Austrian major—The policy of the Aulic Council and of the Court of St. James relative to Louis XVIII.—The King states his views in council at Blankenburg—A description of that town—And of the city of Brunswick—The bath-woman.

THE Most Christian King had hoped that he would be permitted to pocket his nomadic Court, at least for some time, within the confines of the Venetian States. Although the Republican armies had won great advantages on the Rhine, no one imagined in 1795 that next year Buonaparte would make so triumphant a military entry into Italy. But from that time Louis XVIII. understood that he could no longer hope to "reign" peacefully at Verona; he raised his Court as one raises a camp, and determined to return to Germany to revive the courage of the Royal army. I followed His Majesty upon this journey.

The King's reception on reaching Condé's army was noble and brilliant. The cannon of the faithful legions announced far and wide the welcome extended to His Majesty, and his cousin paraded before him the regiments of Champagne, Flanders, Roussillon, Royal-Comtois, etc., etc., consisting of at least twenty men apiece. I was really sorry that H. S. H. the Prince de Condé had had so unhappy an idea: it reminded me of the little squads of supernumeraries whom I had seen manœuvring in London in the military pantomimes of Mr. Astley, which have since been surpassed in their kind by the Messieurs Franconi,\* but which were really not approached, in 1796, by the descendant of the victor of Rocroy and Senef.†

This incident, however, may be dismissed as absurd: of more

\* Antonio Franconi, 1738—1836, became Astley's partner when he opened a circus in Paris in 1783. Later he himself opened the Cirque Olympique, which was continued by his sons and grandsons.

† The Grand Condé. Rocroy (1643) was his first victory, Senef (1675) his last.

serious import was a visit which His Majesty received at his head-quarters from an Austrian officer, very straight and stiff, very much buttoned up, very tightly belted, and booted, as they say, to the heart, who, in the name of the Emperor his master had come to pay the Most Christian King an exceedingly poor compliment.

I was in the room next to that in which the envoy of Francis II. was received, and I overheard every word of the interview, particularly since the King's voice was inclined to be a rather shrill falsetto, while the Austrian officer's broken French was pitched in a very high key, doubtless to make himself better understood.

"Monsieur le Comte . . ." said the officer, after innumerable bows, as I gathered from the prolonged clattering of his spurs.

"To which count are you speaking, monsieur?" interrupted the King, sharply.

"I am speaking to Your Royal Highness," replied the officer, who was following his instructions like a simple corporal.

"In that case, monsieur, be so good as to remember that you are in the presence of the King of France and Navarre."

"The Emperor my master has forbidden me, Monsieur le Comte, to give Your Royal Highness any other title than that by which I have the great honour to address you at this moment."

"And which is the County that His Austrian Majesty deigns in his munificence to bestow upon me?" asked the King, in a sly tone resulting doubtless from his keen displeasure.

"Your Royal Highness's County," replied the Austrian, "is that of Lille."

"It is not a happy choice, monsieur the major; and the Emperor might at least have granted me a County which his arms had conquered. The King of Prussia might, for instance, have created me Comte de Verdun or Longevy; the King of England, Comte de Valenciennes."

"Tartaisle,\* Monsieur le Comte, Valenciennes was captured by the troop of the Emperor my master."†

"The fact is open to question, monsieur the major; but let us

\* *Der Teufel?*

† 1793.

not waste time over my County *in partibus*, and be good enough to tell me what you want with me."

"I come on behalf of the Emperor, my gracious master, and of General Wurmser, my commanding officer, to beg Your Royal Highness to leave the territory occupied by the armies of His Imperial Majesty."

"What you tell me is impossible."

"Here is the written order of my general, M. le Comte de Wurmser."

The King took the paper which the officer handed him with every display of Austrian politeness; and after glancing through it, His Majesty exclaimed:

"It is ordered... it is ordered: what a phrase!... from a simple general addressing a crowned head!"

"What answer shall I give my general, Monsieur le Comte?"

"You will tell him, monsieur, that the King of France and Navarre is in the midst of his troops, and that he will not leave."

"In that case, Monsieur le Comte, I shall be placed in the disagreeable necessity of having Your Royal Highness removed by a regiment of Hussars."

"Monsieur, monsieur," cried the King in the most piercing tones of his shrill voice, "my brave Noble Guards will not suffer any one to approach their King."

"Monsieur le Comte, all French officers and troops in the army of the Emperor my master are under the orders of His Imperial and Royal Majesty's generals. M. le Comte de Wurmser will have them disarmed at the first sign of revolt."

"Go, monsieur...."

Here the clattering of spurs recommenced, the Austrian foot glided anew over the floor, and I gathered that the emissary was bowing his farewell to the King with all the forms of politeness which he had employed on his arrival. But I nevertheless, shortly afterwards, heard the Uhlans, the instruments of the Emperor's orders, forming line on the little square at Muhlheim, where His Majesty then was, and I heard the order to dismount. It was evident that this body of cavalry had received orders to carry off Louis XVIII. after a certain time if His Majesty did not yield with a good grace.

In the course of the evening the King summoned his council,

in which the Comte d'Avaray always had a preponderating voice. His Majesty's position was carefully considered, and it was acknowledged that the best thing to do, for the time, was to yield.

Louis XVIII. could not well hope to be recognized as King of France and Navarre by the belligerent Powers. Austria had recently informed him of the *sine quâ non* conditions upon which the Aulic Council consented not only to sanction his Royalty but to support it with all its power. These conditions were short and explicit: His Majesty the Emperor asked the hand of Madame de France, then at Vienna, for his brother the Archduke Charles, and the Duchy of Lorraine as the Princess's dowry. Louis XVIII. replied to the diplomatic note in which these two demands were raised: 1st, that Madame's hand, agreeably to the dying intentions, the sacred intentions of the Martyr King, was promised to M. le Duc d'Angoulême; 2nd, that a King of France, even if enjoying all the fulness of his power, was not able to dispose of any part of his territory in favour of a stranger. This noble and high-principled reply did not meet the Emperor's views, and was the cause of the refusal of recognition which was founded wretchedly upon deceived ambition, and of the act of depotism intimated to the King.... It makes a hideous page in the history of the Emperor Francis: I know none but those of 1813 and 1814 which are uglier.\*

The Cabinet of St. James was less grossly positive, but did not show itself more favourable to Louis XVIII.'s roving royalty. Pitt was willing to permit M. d'Harcourt to play at being ambassador: that was a bit of amateur diplomacy which nobody could object to. But the views of the British Cabinet, although politer and better disguised, were still more exacting than those of the German Cæsar. George III. had declared that he did not choose that the pretender should set foot on Vendéan soil. His Majesty in his lucid moments remembered that the Crown of England had once possessed the Duchies of Guienne, Normandy and Brittany; that Calais had been a British possession; and that as late as in the reign of Louis XIV.,

\* Francis in 1813 joined the coalition formed against Napoleon, his son-in-law.

a citadel occupied by an English garrison had stood, a menacing, mocking object, in the port of Dunkirk.... See, what a favourable opportunity was the present war to win back these jewels snatched from the English Crown; what a fortunate occasion to legalize, by force of possession, the title of King of France which was then borne in ridicule by the English sovereign! That is how political heads in England reasoned and speculated in 1796. I have already explained the attitude of Louis XVIII.'s council after the Emperor's message. The king decided to leave for Blankenburg, and to live there until new orders came, under the title of the Comte de Lille, since Comte de Lille there was.

"Yes, messieurs," said His Majesty, on a later occasion, "I bow now, like the reed; but I shall soon spring up again.... It is from France, messieurs, that our fate will be decided: that is where we must act and persevere."

Some one observing that it was to be wished that earlier efforts in this direction had been made in the interest of the cause, the King replied:

"Do you think I have waited till to-day to obey this necessity? When the time comes I will prove to you that since the very commencement of their republic I have always had my confidential agents in the Convention.... Had your political sight been a little more practised, you might have seen the fleur-de-lys waving upon the Mountain itself."

"On the Mountain!" cried several noblemen at once.

"Yes, messieurs, on the Mountain.... Now the thing is changed: the power is no longer in the hands of the legislature, and the Directorate is too weak to be able to retain it.... No, the power is concentrated in the armies: it is in the ranks that I must win partisans. By dismissing Pichegru\* from his command, they thought they were spoiling my plans: on the con-

\* The bribe offered to Pichegru by Condé was a million francs down, two hundred thousand francs per annum, the estate of Chambord, and the title of Duc d'Arbois. He allowed the Austrians to gain certain advantages over his troops; was dismissed in 1796; retired into private life at Arbois, his birth-place. When elected to the Five Hundred he placed himself at the head of the Counter-Revolutionary party and was transported to Sinnamari in September 1797. He escaped, reached England in safety, made friends with Georges Cadoudal, the Chouan, and returned to France in 1804. He was arrested and imprisoned in the Temple, where he died very soon after, strangled either by order of Buonaparte or by his own hands.

trary, egad! for my partisans have sent Pichegru to the Council of the Five Hundred while others have given me Moreau\* on the Rhine.... Meanwhile Barras, who is the real president of the Directorate, can be of use to me in bringing together the various elements of the Counter-Revolution, but the damned fellow is expensive †.... however, I shall see. Meantime, here we are at Blankenburg."

Blankenburg is a very insignificant town in the Duchy of Brunswick. Its inhabitants are great smokers, fearless beer-drinkers and for the rest honest people. Their women, a feeble, lymphatic sort, vegetate in their household like a mushroom in its bed, and fade almost as quickly. Blankenburg therefore is not a particularly inspiriting residence for anybody; and one who remembers the delicious turmoil of Paris yawns regularly once a second in this Brunswick town.

As His Majesty had not yet deigned to take me into his political confidence except in so far as the financial department was concerned, I left the Most Christian King to deliberate daily in council on the Clichy conspiracy § and repaired to the capital of the Duchy, where I hoped to find less tediousness and a better investment for the poor remnants of my fortune.... It would be all over with the latter if it were allowed to enter as an element in any conspiracy .... In short, two thousand louis was all that remained between me and the necessity of resuming my comb.

Brunswick is a gay, lively, well-built, well-lighted city, in whose midst rises an elegant palace, the charming residence of the reigning Duke. The town might well be called a miniature Paris, so notably does it possess the characteristics of a capital. Brunswick has, under another name, its Rue Saint-Honoré, its hand-

\* Moreau was also dismissed a little later on suspicion of being in intelligence with the Directorate, but reinstated in 1798. In 1801, however, after winning the battle of Hohenlinden and concluding his Austrian campaign, Moreau definitely began to conspire against Buonaparte with Georges Cadoudal and Pichegru. He was tried and exiled to the United States. There he accepted the offers of the Czar Alexander, and consented to fight against his countrymen. Barely, however, had he reached the head-quarters of the Allies, near Dresden, before he had both legs shot off by a cannon-ball, 26 August, 1813. He died a few days afterwards.

† Twelve millions of francs was Barras' price to restore the Bourbons.

§ So-called because the Royalists used to meet at Clichy-la-Garenne, near Paris. The conspiracy was upset on the 4th of September, 1797.

some cafés, its little milliners with their provoking glances, a number of tastefully arranged shops, comfortable coaches and hotels furnished in good style.

I put up in one of the latter, and wanted for nothing that I could have found in a hotel in the Rue Richelieu: rooms excellently furnished, a French table-d'hôte, and baths which were almost sybaritic. These I had long been hunting for, content to find them less luxurious but at least not disgusting. Such establishments were at that time rare in Germany. I was glad to find one at Brunswick, and I had no sooner removed my travelling-boots than I asked to be shown to the part of the house containing the baths. According to the custom of the country, the bath-attendants were all women. I paid no notice to the woman who came to turn on the taps in my bathroom, fearing lest I should find her pretty; and certainly, in the occupation followed by these creatures, there is a great danger of their including their charms among the other accessories with which they supply one.

Accordingly I did not observe that my attendant looked at me with great attention, as she afterwards told me. When she returned, at my call, and brought the towels, which, according to the custom, she held up before her face, a buckler as it were for her chastity, she looked at me from the corner of her eye, and sure at last of her facts, exclaimed :

“ You are Monsieur Léonard.... ”

“ Certainly, and who are you then ? ” asked I, looking at my bath-attendant, a fat, buxom woman of forty-four or forty-five, still fresh-looking and even pretty.

“ I am Laure, the sweetheart of poor Frémont, the friend of Julie the dancer, the fairy of the Théâtre Nicolet.”

“ Ah ! I remember you perfectly now.... But what strange series of events has turned you into a bath-attendant at Brunswick ! ”

“ Strange events indeed.... ”

At that moment a violent ringing summoned her away.

“ That’s my cue,” said Laure, gaily, “ I have to officiate elsewhere; but I will come and see you in your room, my dear Monsieur Léonard.... What is your number ? ”

“ Corridor number one, room number three.”

"Very well; at ten this evening.... Do you ever read novels in bed?"

"From time to time."

"Well, I will tell you one, that will be more amusing.... Till to-night."

And Laure went out singing:

"Lison dormait dans un bocage  
Un pied par-ci . . . . ."

(Another violent ring.)

"In a minute, coming.... I will wager it is a Frenchman: always in a hurry, the French.

"Un pied par-ci, l'autre par-là."

And I said to myself. "She is quite unchanged...." But I was wrong.

## CHAPTER XXVIII

### Laure's Story.

AT ten o'clock exactly, three little timid knocks at my door told me that Laure had kept her word. She was dressed with a certain coquetry, a sort of refinement dug up from the French fashions antecedent to the Revolution. But I also observed that in her whole dress there was something modest, bashful, even mystical, which surprised me when I thought of what were the ex-dancer's actual functions.... Long sleeves, a carefully closed kerchief, hiding away all that was at that period exposed with great boldness, and a modest, timid gait, very different from the lively, forward carriage of the day: that was what struck me as my old acquaintance entered my room. I remembered her at Nicolet's, giddy, sparkling, free in words and actions, no more hesitating to drink her ten glasses of champagne at supper than to accept her four adventures in the course of twenty-four hours; and I thought, "Has misfortune changed this woman's habits? Has its iron hand tempered even more than age could do the fervour of her imagination, the ardour of her blood?" It was neither age nor misfortune which had brought about this change; only Laure's habits, remodelled by her destiny, had received new forms. Her character had in no way participated in the changes, as I was that evening able to learn.

"You will expect to hear, Monsieur Léonard," said the bath-attendant, sitting down by my side upon one of those sofas which you find all over Germany, "that a long series of follies have formed the links in the chain of my adventures. If so, you are mistaken. Since the year 1775, my life has been mainly ecclesiastical."

"What? ecclesiastical?" interrupted I, with quick merriment.

"Yes, Monsieur Léonard, ecclesiastical, though not orthodox, as you shall hear for yourself."

And resuming her narrative, Laure continued :

"I joined the opera at the same time as my friend Julie, whose destiny soon made her a landgravine."

"And then a flower-worker, and next a Polish colonel."

"Nonsense! . . . But I do not know why I should be surprised. Nothing should astonish one in the quaint, whimsical coquette whom we call destiny . . . Has she not made a good woman of one . . . ?"

"Really!"

"Your exclamation is not polite, my dear countryman; but I forgive you since the fact is so rare. Well, I figured at the Opera in that conglomeration of dancers whose excesses, like the manœuvres of an infantry battalion, leave but a fleeting fraction of success to each of the individuals composing it. For two years I schemed to reach the first row, the only place in which a dancer's fortune can emerge from the succession of casual windfalls which never constitute the most modest prosperity. At last, thanks to two or three lucky *entrechats*, cut at haphazard, I had attained the greatly desired front row, when my eye, practised at spying adorers across the shimmering of the foot-lights, lit upon a fat gentleman with a rubicund, pimpled face, a thick head of hair and a gold-laced waistcoat, who was quizzing me through his glass with great persistency. He showed all the symptoms of a financial nature and fortune . . . a financial fortune the exploitation of which beautified all the castles in Spain of us dancers of the second class. I was mistaken, however, as to the profession of the man whose attention I had attracted, and who was nothing less than a rich, fat Benedictine, one of the bigwigs in the congregation of St. Maurus,\* a monk of Marmontier † in a word; which proved to me later, more than all the arguments in the world, that it is not the cowl which makes the monk.

"Dom Joseph waited upon me the next day, with his opera

\* The congregation of St. Maurus was founded out of the Benedictine Order in 1013 and confirmed by Pope Gregory XV. in 1621.

† A celebrated Benedictine monastery near Tours, on the opposite bank of the Loire. Its superior was known as the "Abbot of Abbots." The name is derived from *Martini Monasterium*: founded by St. Martin, Bishop of Tours.

hat under his arm, his sword by his side, fondling an exquisite lace frill with a very white hand gleaming with diamonds. He made his declaration with all the ease which a *roué* of the Regency would have put into his endeavours to ruin the reputation of an abbess....

"'The Court,' said he, 'has long known that one takes monastic orders to enable one to continue to lead a life of fashion upon a middling income; and the most scrupulous of monarchs now agrees that to live fashionably one must live without restraint, scruples or prejudices. Louis XVI. himself though a little straight-laced, has not been able to deny that it would be a piece of horrible tyranny to exact from a nobleman in religious orders that he should become a monk after the manner of the people, dirty, shuffling, sober and chaste. The great abbeys of France have their privileges: they turn them to account, and rightly. We Benedictines, for instance, have been petitioning parliament for ten years for leave to wear the *aile de pigeon* and the *queue*: when it pleases Messieurs to go into our case seriously, there is no doubt that the order of St. Maurus will triumph. In fact, I should not be surprised to see the members of our beloved congregation authorized to wear short coats and a small collar.\*

"'In the meantime our community at Marmontier is once a year liberated as to one third from the monastic fetters. There are three of us in the abbey, and we have a yearly revenue of 400,000 livres to spend. The walls of a convent, however extensive, are too limited to allow of such an expenditure. So we have come to this understanding: each year one of us comes to Paris for six months, with 50,000 crowns in his pocket, of which he is entitled to spend the whole, and never, at the expiration of his leave, does he bring a single crown back to Marmontier. The two other brothers manage to live as comfortably as possible on the 250,000 livres remaining; and you may imagine they have not many privations to suffer. Pleasure is cheap in the country; victuals cost next to nothing; beauty accepts payment in kind.

"'But the brother who comes to Paris enjoys life on a larger scale. His monk's cowl, his vows of chastity, his obligations of continence and sobriety are left behind at the Barrière d'Enfer:

\* *L'habit court et le petit collet*: the distinctive dress of the regular clergy.

he enters the Paradise of the *bon vivants* in the quality of the elect of luxury, good living and voluptuousness.... This year it is my turn ; I have come to make a compact with you, my pretty Laure ; we shall have six months and 150,000 livres to spend together. *Dixi.*'

"'You have spoken well, father,' I replied, screaming with laughter, 'and if you chant the gospel as excellently, God must be extremely satisfied with you.'

"'Good, I see I have come to the right address,' replied Dom Joseph, commencing certain familiarities which were not yet legally authorized, and which I hastened to subdue.

"'One moment, father,' said I, in a half-jesting, half-serious voice. 'Let us proceed in order. I know that monastic affections are driven quickly to their conclusion ; but for those of the theatre there are certain principles which we dancers do not allow to be neglected....'

"'True, true, my pretty Laure ; let us return to our principles....' So saying, Dom Joseph placed a roll of fifty louis on my chimney-piece by way of pin-money, and told me that he would come and sup with me that night and sign the contract.

"At half past ten the monk of Marmontier returned, and we concluded our arrangement on the terms of a promise of 6,000 livres a month, payable in advance.

"I am really sorry, for the sake of the glory of your sex," continued the Brunswick bath-attendant, gaily, "that the monastic orders have been suppressed in France. To judge by the Benedictines they were very fine institutions. Father Joseph's six months' stay in Paris passed, as I thought, with extraordinary rapidity ; but it was not possible to prolong it by a week. The 50,000 crowns brought from the convent came to an end, with marvellous punctuality, even as the time appointed for their expenditure : Dom Joseph was a man of order.

"It was hard to part from an adorer who was able to calculate the employment of his gold as lavishly as that of his time : I complimented him most sincerely. He was sensible to this mark of my regret.

"'I don't see how we can remain together, my dear Laure,' said Dom Joseph. 'To take you to Tours would be easy enough ; but down there the three members of the community



have everything in common.... and you will agree....'

"Yes! I grant that a passion such as yours, multiplied by three, does not leave much time for reflection; but the grace of God is infinite....'

"Infinite! a strong word in the sense which you give it, my dear. However, you know the resources of "grace" better than I do. Think it over, and if you feel inclined to come to Marmontier, you must make your adieux to-night at the Opera, for to-morrow we shall post to Tours.'

"I had made up my mind before evening. Dom Joseph had drawn so attractive a picture of the interior of his abbey; he had painted in such charming colours the mysterious pavilion where I should receive the alternate homage of the three Benedictines; and finally the splendid repasts we were to partake of with a small company of adepts, and the sparkling champagne which I was to pour out, a generous Hebe, seemed to promise a life so joyous, so much in keeping with my carelessness of the future, so agreeable to my desire to enjoy the present without embarrassing it with care or anxiety, that I said to Dom Joseph, 'I will go with you to-morrow, without taking leave of any one.'

"What! not even of your friends at the Opera?"

"An excellent way of preventing my creditors knowing of my departure."

"Why, Laure, are you in debt?"

"Do you take me, Dom Joseph, for a vulgar woman?"

"We must now think of how we are to get you into the community under the eyes of our numerous servants."

"In the dress of a young gardener, for instance...."

"An expedient of the Comédie Italienne which will arouse a great outcry, for it will be considered even more Italian than the Comedy. No, it would be better to introduce you in your dancing dress: it would be more moral!"

"I have an idea, Dom Joseph!"

"What is it, Laure?"

"Suppose I were to come to Marmontier as a novice."

"There have never been novices in our house.... No, I shall have to admit you at night, by the little garden gate."

"On the evening of the next day we arrived at Tours. It

was a fine moonlight night. Never did I experience a surprise to equal that which seized me when I beheld an edifice as immense as the Hôtel des Invalides in Paris, and inhabited by only three monks. ‘O religious humility!’ I cried aloud.

“‘Humility!’ replied Dom Joseph, scornfully. ‘A Franciscan virtue!... That is good for the monastic small fry, who spend their time in fasting and praying. We are the Lord’s fat kine, and our mission is to give him thanks: and so that we may know what we are talking of, we must first enjoy our lives.’

“‘And salvation, father?’

“‘We begin to think of that at an age when our actions can no longer compromise it: that is wise again, my dear Laure.’

“‘Do your two brothers think as you do, Dom Joseph?’

“‘Absolutely, pretty one: we are a trinity which is one in its wishes and inclinations: I will wager you can understand that.’

“During the conversation we had approached the principal door of the convent; but we did not pull up there, and the postilion was ordered to keep along a nice little gravel road which bordered it. The man had not seen me, but the reputation of Messieurs of Marmontier was well-known: he suspected something and obeyed with a great, ‘Humph!’ When we had reached the little gate, Dom Joseph alighted, opened the gate with a key which he took from his pocket, and ordered our big-booted Phæton to unharness the horses, saying that he would have the chaise dragged to a neighbouring wheelwright to be repaired. The postilion may or may not have believed this story; but he did as he was told, and rode off at once.

“When he was gone, I emerged from the back of the chaise, where I had sat ensconced. Dom Joseph led me to a charming pavilion: the bright moonlight enabled me to admire its elegant architecture and its delicate shutters painted green. This building, I assure you, had nothing clostral about it, and seeing it you would believe that if it was devoted to the exercise of any cult, it was certainly not that of Roman Catholicism.

“Dom Joseph had also a key to this tolerably profane-looking pavilion. He opened the door, we climbed up one floor by the aid of the half-light of the moon... and I found myself in a real *petite maitresse*’s boudoir, provided with every accessory of a luxurious and voluptuous life.

"Bravo, Dom Joseph!" cried I, enraptured, "this promises well."

"This place," said the monk, "was consecrated until to-day to the sentimental eventualities of the community: it was a little temple in which officiated, with great amiability, the wives of Tourangeal notaries, doctors and attorneys.... I am making an innovation in admitting an official divinity; but at the convent my suggestions usually meet with approval: I have over my two brothers the advantage which men of intelligence have over the poor in spirit to whom the Kingdom of Heaven is due."

"Speaking of the simplicity of my excellent brothers in St. Benedict," continued Dom Joseph, "I have had an idea while we were in the post-chaise: I feel very much inclined dear Laure, to keep you for myself and to keep you here at the expense of the community."

"An intrigue," cried I, clapping my hands, "the very thing!"

"Only you will have to adapt yourself to circumstances: it will be necessary that the other two should not know that you are living in this pavilion."

"Anything you please, Dom Joseph: but no imprisonment."

"What are you thinking of, Laure!... You shall have complete liberty, an excellent service, continual good cheer; you shall go out when you like, go to the theatre if that amuses you; go to Paris for six months every three years, with an existence at the rate of 100,000 crowns a year; and the rest of the time you shall have a charming little household here. Good-night, Laure; I must leave you, for I have to arrive in proper form for my brothers.... I shall arrange our little plan in my head to-night, and I will come and tell you of it to-morrow at breakfast."

Hereupon Joseph gave me a good kiss and went out, leaving me in the company of two candles and a little crackling wood-fire, which he had lit as one accustomed to the place.

A quarter of an hour later there entered a fine stout peasant-girl, with ruddy cheeks, red arms, an ample bosom, thick red lips, a laughing mouth, very white teeth and the boldest air in the world.... I was not surprised to find this lass in Brother Joseph's intimacy.

The pleasant creature brought me, in a napkin knotted by the four corners, four dishes, one above the other, with a little loaf, a *miche* as she called it, under her arm. In the twinkling

of an eye she laid before the fire a neat cover for one, all the requisites for which she found in a cupboard in the room in which I sat. Then touching a brass knob jutting from the wall-paper, she opened a closet containing what the monks call "a select library," that is to say numerous rows of bottles lying on lathes and with seals that struck me as respectable. The buxom girl took out a volume, and said, with her open laugh, 'Supper is served.'

"I see, my pretty child, that you have been sent by Dom Joseph to keep me company."

"Yes, madame, by Dom Joseph, your uncle.... He has told me of your misfortune, madame.... Poor little woman! to be left a widow so young.... How I cried when he told me. It is lucky and no less, that you have such an uncle; for he told me your husband had been killed in a duel after losing all your fortune and even your diamonds at play.... Ah, you will be as happy here as a fish in a pond; but you must not let Dom Lambert or Dom Frégosse see you: that might cause a brawl; I have seen that before.... as the saying is, when three huntsmen are after the same hare....'

"You are mistaken, my child,' I replied, seizing the monk's idea. 'I am not a relation in the manner of the curates' nieces, and Dom Joseph is really my uncle. He respects me, and I hope he will make me respected by his colleagues.'

"Oh, as to that, I think he does well in not showing you to the others.'

"That may be difficult.'

"Dom Joseph says he will succeed all the same.'

"Has he told you what means he intends to employ?" I asked of the young girl, less with the idea of evoking a positive reply than to try and discover, from the extent of the confidence he placed in her, how far he had succeeded in resisting the charms of this worthy peasant-lass.

"No, madame, Dom Joseph told me nothing. But he is a cunning one, all the same, and when he takes up a thing he is pretty certain to carry it through.'

"Oh, oh,' said I, munching a fried salsify, and pretending not to attach the slightest importance to my question, 'has my uncle ever tried his skill on you, my dear child?'

"‘Holy Virgin, never!’ replied the girl in a tone which proved to me that dissimulation is born under the cottage beneath the old oak-tree as well as in the tumult of great cities. But I had seen the damsel blush, and I thought, Dom Joseph, you must be watched !

“When I had finished supper, the young girl, who told me her name was Nanette, went to the wall opposite that which concealed ‘the library,’ and touching an almost invisible spring, raised the wall-paper as quickly as though it had been a blind, and I saw that it had covered a door, which Nanette opened.

“‘This is your room, madame,’ said she, going before me, with a candle in either hand.

“I beheld a bedroom such as Mademoiselle Guimard in her best days might have longed to possess.

“‘Really, my dear Nanette,’ said I, as I explored this charming retreat, ‘they say good taste is lost in Paris, but I see it has taken refuge with the monks of Marmontier.’

“‘It’s no wonder,’ said the buxom lass, shaking her head; ‘there’s more money spent here on fine furniture than on church ornaments.’

“‘Am I to sleep here alone?’ I asked, remembering with some alarm that the pavilion was very isolated and stood at the extreme end of the gardens.

“‘Oh no,’ replied Nanette, showing me the door of a little closet: ‘there is a bed in there where I sleep.’ And the good village-girl offered me her services in undressing, acquitting herself with such dexterity that I suspected it was not the first time.... I learnt later on that Nanette had waited upon all the ladies whom ‘circumstances’ had brought to the pavilion.

“Early the next day Dom Joseph entered my room: Nanette was already up and in the garden.

“‘Well, niece, and how have you spent the night?’ he asked, sitting down cavalierly on my bed, despite his monk’s gown.

“‘Excellently, dear uncle; this is a very good and moreover a very coquettish hostelry which you keep at the bottom of your garden.’

“‘I have thought my plan out here,’ resumed Joseph, tapping his forehead.

“‘Ah! tell me, dear uncle.’

"'You shall not know, my dear Laure, until after it is put into execution.' And draping himself in his gown, like Mithridate at the Théâtre Français, Joseph added :

"..... Et pour être approuvés,  
De semblables projets veulent être achevés.

"'My plan,' he continued, 'is a piece of sheer madness; but the dear brothers are simple enough to be taken in.... If I succeed it will be something amusing to tell you.... Do not ask me before : I fear your scruples....'

"'Dom Joseph, I come from the Opera.'

"'Never mind.... we will keep the explanation for to-night, for my project is to be carried out this very day....'

"'In my presence?'

"'No, my dear Laure; for three hours only you must remain secluded here, in this room; I venture to hope that after that the pavilion will belong to us alone.... "Our household" will be delivered from the importunities of a neighbouring monastery,' added Dom Joseph, with joyous disdain. And having come to this conclusion, with one other which I will not mention, my Benedictine went out. I did not see him again until late that evening.

"True, I had heard footsteps come and go in the room next to mine; but I had received no information as to what was taking place since three o'clock in the afternoon. At that hour Nanette, after serving me a dinner that was as delicate as it was abundant, disappeared, and the strip of wall-paper which drew up like a blind fell over my door.

"Dom Joseph entered suddenly, bursting with laughter. 'Complete victory,' he cried, kissing me, 'the citadel is ours, and the enemy is in full flight. I could never have believed that, at the end of the eighteenth century two men who have worked at *l'Art de vérifier les dates*, who have read Voltaire, who frequent the world for six months every three years at the rate of 25,000 livres per month: I could never have believed, I say, that they could be so simple as to believe in ghosts.... And yet, my dear Laure, it is the terror which they feel of the shade of one of our defunct brothers, a shade which they have not even seen, which gives us our safety. Listen to the story:

"I told Brothers Lambert and Frégosse that, according to our custom, we would celebrate my return to-day in community, that is to say, by ourselves, but in this pavilion, where one is sheltered from intruders and where our best wines are kept. In order to be absolutely free from visitors or from any interruption, it was agreed that the dainty repast should take the form of a supper, and my two colleagues, who on these occasions never leave the table until they are in immediate need of their beds, thought this decision very convenient. At eight o'clock the covers were laid in the dining-room of the pavilion: at a quarter past eight, after the Angelus had been tolled and our breviaries said, Lambert, Frégosse and I set out for this place: the supper stood steaming on table at our arrival.

"Nothing unusual happened during the first two courses, except a monk's appetite, in other words a wolf's appetite, on the part of the two brothers. You see, Laure, they had not just returned, like me, from Paris, where the gluttony of the cloister is enfeebled and enervated by the exquisite delicacies of the pleasure-houses and select parties. But at dessert there came a change: it was a question of resorting to our "select library," and I begged Brother Frégosse, the youngest among us, to go to the next room and fetch some flagons of the best "editions."

"Already Dom Frégosse was staggering under the influence of the ordinary burgundy. He rose and then with zig-zag steps made his way, candle in hand, to the well-stored closet. But I had prepared my little comedy, and I was not surprised to see the brother returning without the flagons.

"I can understand," he stammered, in painfully embarrassed tones, "that the secret knob has escaped my sight, because my sight is not very clear at present; but, God's blood, I have not lost my sense of touch.... and yet I found no more knob beneath my hand than is there at this moment."

"Hereupon Brother Lambert began to laugh in his colleague's face, and rose in his turn to do the errand which the fuddled Frégosse had not been able to fulfil; but this bantering monk returned after three minutes as crest-fallen as his predecessor.

"Come, brothers," I cried, "this is a little too much: I could have understood if you had each swallowed down two of the

'volumes' which you are not even able to fetch. I will fetch them myself; and egad, to punish your clumsiness, I shall make you swallow all that I can carry above six flagons.... Let no one follow me: I intend to be the only Argonaut of this expedition." And I rushed off.

"Listen, Laure, to the end of my tale: I stayed away as long as was necessary to set my hair on end, to bleach my features with whiting artfully applied, and to justify the story I was about to relate.

"At last I ran back, uttering terrible yells, and appeared before my brothers dishevelled, with haggard eyes, quivering legs, and carrying in my trembling hand a broken, extinguished candle. With a comedian's inspiration I lay back in my arm-chair, and gave vent to my pantry respiration; and at last I came out with my tale:

"“I went up to the fatal cupboard.... full of confidence, and like yourselves I looked for the knob, uselessly, when suddenly the door opened of itself."

"“Of itself!"

"“Yes, of itself," I replied, in a hollow voice, "and suddenly I saw...."

"“Egad, brother," interrupted Frégosse, "you saw some bottles...."

"“I saw," I repeated in a voice of thunder, "I saw the ghost of the late Brother Fernel, who died of a cholic, five years ago, in the next room."

"“Eh, what, what do you mean?" cried Dom Lambert, stupefied.

"“Yes, what.... do.... do.... do you mean," repeated Frégosse, suddenly sobered.

"“I tell you this terrible adventure did not end with a mere vision.... the dead man took my neck between his two bony hands.... a real grip of iron, my brothers; and this is word for word what he said to me in cavernous accents: 'You shall not touch that wine; it belongs to me; I have paid for it with the fourteen thousand years of purgatory to which I am condemned.... Listen to me, Brother Joseph, listen to what I say, and remember it: for if you neglect a single iota, you and the community shall suffer for it. The friends I have made down below

cost me dear, but they serve me well: if I am not satisfied with your docility, the Convent of Marmontier shall shake every night on its foundations; your beds shall rock like children's cradles; and before six months have elapsed all the wine you drink shall taste like an infusion of wild chicory....

"'In the first place,' continued Dom Fernel, 'I wish that every day, with punctilious exactitude, I shall be served in this pavilion at ten o'clock with a copious breakfast, at three a splendid repast, at nine a delicate supper: as soon as each meal is served the bearer will withdraw.... I have my own people, and they are orderly people: they will clean the plates.... In order that the service may be complete, I appoint you, Joseph, the inspector of my offices: consequently you may retain your right of entering the pavilion. But if anyone else dares to set foot in it, he will be strangled at once by these wrists, whose strength you will not easily forget.'

"'So much for the nourishment of my body: for it is well you should know that we take our three meals a day in purgatory,' continued Dom Fernel, slightly relaxing his vice-like grip, which he had tightened the better to make me understand its strength. 'Now let us talk of the food of my soul. I want three hours' prayer a day. This task will fall to Brothers Lambert and Frégosse. Tell them so from me, and warn them that while they pray, I shall have my watch in my hand. These prayers must correspond with the times when I am taking my meals in this pavilion; I wish my body and soul to be fed together... I have spoken: take care lest you forget anything; and advise your brothers to be as obedient and as punctual as yourself, or the convent will dance at night and the wines be transformed into an infusion of chicory.'

"Dom Fernel ceased speaking; I felt my throat free from his grip, and the door of the cupboard closed to with a solemn sound it had never given before... Evidently at that moment our cupboard communicated directly with purgatory."

"The effect of this story,' continued Dom Joseph, 'was exactly what I anticipated: Lambert and Frégosse, who had long been on their feet, were waiting impatiently till I had finished, to leave the pavilion. Their feet beat the floor as though they were on hot bricks; and they would certainly not have waited for the

end of my narrative before taking flight, had not the most invincible obstacle retained them. To reach the staircase it was necessary to cross the room in which the apparition had taken place; and this my credulous brothers could not bring themselves to do without the protection of me, the inspector of offices to the deceased.

"At last, Lambert and Frégosse took hold of my gown and dragged me out of the pavilion, whence the servants had disappeared at the first word of the story of the terrible apparition.

"That is what I have done, my dear child," said my dear Benedictine, with a triumphant air, "and that is the result I have obtained. Now let us go to the dining-room, where Nanette, who is not afraid of ghosts, is getting things in order, and let us have supper by ourselves. For while I was thinking out my comedy, I had nothing either to eat or drink. Be easy, Lambert and Frégosse will not come and disturb you: they have locked themselves into their cells and are praying aloud for the repose of the soul of Brother Fernel. They are at their business, let us to ours."

"What more shall I tell you, Monsieur Léonard?" continued Laure, passing over all those details of intimacy which one can supply for one's self. "I spent fifteen whole years in the pavilion at Marmontier, and Frégosse and Lambert never dared to come within fifty paces of it; I gave birth to two pretty little girls, whom Dom Joseph adopted as his nieces: it was understood that Benedictines might have nieces... At the moment of the outbreak of the Revolution, the more favoured monks were petitioning for a concession of cousins; but thanks to the abolition of the monasteries, they were able to allow themselves women conjugally without any risk of their concubinage being condemned.

"We were in Paris, Joseph and I, when that great event occurred. We had 50,000 crowns in our pockets; I was forty, the brother was approaching his forty-eighth year; we agreed upon one essential point: that it would be prudent, now that the revolutionary storm was bursting overhead, not, as in the past, to spend our money on enjoyments which for us were no longer imperious needs. Shortly after our arrival in Paris, the decree pronouncing the abolition of monastic orders was uttered and promulgated.

"I have an idea," said Joseph, after reading the decree. "Let us get married, Laure."

"Let us get married, Dom Joseph," said I in my turn.

"And a fortnight later we were civilly married. The nuptial benediction did not come till much later," added Laure with a sigh.

"My husband," continued the Brunswick bath-attendant, "had lived for twenty years with Lambert and Frégosse; he felt for them that friendship born of habit where constancy is worth more perhaps than the vivacity of any deeper sentiment; and desiring to give them good advice, in time for them to avail themselves of it, he wrote to them in these terms:

"Brothers, the Legislative Assembly decrees that the doors of 'the communities shall be broken open. Do not wait for them to 'hunt you from yours; for it is well that you should know that 'if our legislators are bent upon giving you your liberty, they 'are no less bent upon appropriating your property. So hasten 'and pack up all you can gather together of the revenues of 'Marmontier, and having made your packs, bid farewell to the 'abbey walls.

"Of my private authority, and without referring to Dom Fernel, 'I release you from the prayers he imposed upon you fifteen 'years ago. These, brothers, cannot but have greatly advanced 'your salvation, and I wanted the exclusive use of our pretty 'pavilion for a charming little woman whom I have just married 'before a municipal officer in a tricolor scarf.'

"In times of revolution events follow fast. At the end of 1792 my husband was appointed captain of Grenadiers in a Parisian battalion, and set out for the frontier, I accompanying him. Our daughters, one aged fifteen, the other barely fourteen, had shown a taste for their mother's first state: they had just become dancers, and it seemed as though I had only withdrawn one member from the Opera ballet in 1775 in order to return to it in 1792 two young people who promised well and who have since, unfortunately, fulfilled more than they promised.

"By the summer of 1796, Joseph had become a brigadier-general; but he was seriously wounded during Moreau's retreat

and taken prisoner of war. All our possessions were in his pocket-book, of which Prince Charles's Pandours did not omit to despoil him. This sad news reached me at Strasburg ; the general had made me take a house there, wishing to spare me the fatigues and dangers which a woman encounters when following the army. I hastened to join him at Brunswick, where the Archduke had given him leave to go ; but alas, I brought him but a poor succour, the proceeds of the sale of some jewellery.

"Joseph's wound did not at first seem to endanger his life. But accidents supervened, and after languishing two months and a half, my poor husband died in my arms in December last. He left me in this very hotel, in debt and without resources. They wanted a bath-attendant. No one here would have thought of offering the place to a general's widow ; but that widow was honest, and starving : I applied for the humble position, in order to pay off my debts and satisfy the needs of my stomach.

"That is my story, Monsieur Léonard," added Laure, in a mystic tone which threw a light upon her hermetically closed kerchief and her modest gait. "God wished to punish me for marrying a priest ; I am undergoing a well-deserved penance. Were I in France, the Republic would perhaps allow me a small pension ; but I owe money at Brunswick, and I have none to make a long journey.... So I bathe the Brunswickers while waiting for better things."

"Yes," I replied to poor Laure, "but there is a Frenchman at Brunswick now : your lot will change. God is merciful, my dear ; He does not punish the sinner who repents, nor do I believe that He made Joseph fall on the field of battle for becoming a good general instead of a bad priest. Calm your timid conscience ; you shall return to France, the Republic will grant you a pension, because it is due to you ; and God will protect you, for He is not vindictive."

## CHAPTER XXIX

I continue to be the banker of the unfortunate—Three pairs of cotton stockings for 12,000 francs—A general's widow becomes a coco-vendor—Barres and Madame Tallien—Vanity the motive power in everything.

“My dear lady,” I said to Laure, to whose narrative I had listened with interest, strange though it had seemed to me in parts, “when, eight and twenty years ago, I arrived in Paris carrying all my luggage in my pockets, I found two charming women who gave me a helping hand to move from a wretchedly furnished room in the Rue des Noyers into a nice apartment on the Boulevard: such things are never forgotten by honest minds. Julie became the wife of a Prussian general, you the wife of a French general; and I have met both of you, after a period of prosperity, buffeted by capricious fortune. I wish the parallel to be completed in your case. You can leave for France as soon as you please; to-morrow we will settle accounts with the hostess of this house, and I will give you the wherewithal to go to Messieurs of the Directorate and ask them for the pension which is due to you as the widow of a Republican general who died of his wounds.”

The Brunswick bath-attendant was very grateful, as may be imagined, for what I was doing for her. My name and that of Providence were mingled in her thanks and pronounced with an outpouring of pathos and blessings which proved to me unmistakably that Laure had become religious! I thought of the free conversation of the young dancer at Nicolet's, the unconcern with which she would fasten her garter above the knee in the presence of witnesses, the shamelessness of her bearing, her inclination towards tipsiness, and a thousand other little foibles of her youth which had pointed but little towards mysticism; and I reflected, “What oddities time carries in its bosom!”

The next morning I settled with the hostess for Madame Joseph's account. After deducting the bath-attendant's wages earned, and well earned, by the poor general's widow, there remained a modest balance due from her of 20 thalers (about 74 francs of our currency), and this was the chain which kept Laure at Brunswick. It was for the want of this trifling sum that she was obliged to follow a profession which placed her modesty,—become timorous somewhat late in life, it is true—at the mercy of all the rakes of the town.... How often must not the unfortunate Frenchwoman, handsome still at the commencement of her autumn, have had to repel the attacks of insolent youth: attacks in which the blows struck at her chastity were the more dangerous on account of the lightness of the assailants' fighting costume!

Laure refused to accept more than fifty louis for her journey; she even pretended that it was too much, seeing, said she, that to judge by the fine speeches uttered daily in the tribune in favour of the defenders of the Republic, her pension must very soon be settled.... The news I received three months later from the worthy widow proved to me indeed that the directorial Government had taken up her case at once: she received as salary due to her husband at the time of his death and for arrears of pension the considerable sum of twelve thousand francs in territorial warrants.... This return assisted her to pay for three pairs of cotton stockings, she adding to it the sum of six sous in copper.... Laure's ideas on the manner in which the Directorate discharged the debts of the country towards its defenders underwent some change; but she persisted in her resolution not to beg her bread from the opulence of her daughters, which she qualified in her letter to me as "shameful." O mutability of human opinion!

The widow of General Joseph, with the aid of a little remnant remaining from the money I had lent her, set up at the Porte Saint-Denis a business in *coco*,\* which for eight or ten years formed the wonder and the delight of the hackney-coachmen, messengers and water-carriers of the neighbourhood. It was a masterpiece of painted tin, which far surpassed all that had hitherto been imagined to attract consumers at two farthings

\* Liquorice-water.

the glass.... The author of this wondrous work had freed himself from the slavish imitation of pyramids, pagodas and Chinese pavilions: his architectural composition represented the Temple of Glory, in the depths of a gloomy forest, artistically cut out in tin and painted in oil-colour. In front a group of French grenadiers carried a wounded general on their crossed muskets; others marched behind the mournful procession, with downcast heads and arms reversed.... At some distance a genius, posed upon a little mound, showed to the grenadiers the Temple of Glory, through whose doors opened to receive the general, one saw a monumental tomb, on which was read the word MARCEAU.

However, the hero carried to his grave was not really Marceau but General Joseph, killed in the Black Forest near the spot where his illustrious colleague had lost his life not long before \*... What was most admired in all this, what more particularly delighted the urchins of the neighbourhood, was the delicate art with which the figures were carved, clothed, armed and equipped.... The general's uniform, rustling with embroidery, made the young gazers-on exclaim each moment, "Ah, how I should like to have that!"

Madame Joseph did not wish the Temple of Glory to be dishonoured by vulgar taps: little canals, dug beneath the grass of the forest, carried the coco to the foreground, and that insipid beverage seemed to spring from rocks covered with moss and cockle-shells.

Such was Madame Joseph's establishment: often she would see tears springing to the eyes of the sentimental cockneys ever stationed before her economical refreshment-room; and then they would come in and drink, even when not thirsty, so as to leave the widow a token of their sympathy.

One day, about a year after the founding of the interesting coco-fountain, there was a thick crowd around Madame Joseph, who was explaining, as she sometimes did, the scene which was displayed before the public's eyes.

Suddenly the attention was called away by the approach of

\* Francois Sévérin Desgraviers-Marceau was killed at the battle of Altenkirchen in 1796. He was 27 years of age and had been a general officer three years.

an elegant open carriage. Two splendid Danish dogs ran in front ; four spirited chestnuts, champing their bits with impatience at being kept to a trot, drew the carriage, in which lounged a man dressed with the most elegant negligence, with one foot placed upon the front seat, in spite of the presence of a woman seated on his left, dressed, or rather undressed, in the latest fashion, and of dazzling beauty. And the crowd murmured, "It is Barras, the President of our *cing-sires*, with his favourite, Madame Tallien." \*

Meantime that beautiful lady, who had been staring at the coco-rooms through her opera-glass, appeared to be begging the important personage to permit the calash to stop. Barras at first resisted, but finally yielded, alighted, and giving Madame Tallien his hand, assisted her to alight in her turn. They crossed the boulevard and made for Madame Joseph's establishment.... The crowd opens out; the Republicans, who have recovered their politeness, uncover; the President gives them a quasi-royal smile; a cry is raised of "Long live Citizen Barras!" He is charmed.

"You see, Citizen President," lisped Madame Tallien, in a voice no less caressing than her looks, "it is as I was told : very pretty, very ingenious."

"Yes," said the Director, "a very pretty toy. Citizeness," he added, addressing Laure, who had risen, "you must have many visitors here."

"Among whom, Citizen President, there are fortunately a good numbers of drinkers whom I never intoxicate."

"And whom you do not deceive either," resumed the president, "and in that you differ from the Parisian publicans.... Is any historic association attached to the scene you show us here?"

"Yes, citizen," replied the widow, in a firm and decided voice; "this has been constructed in remembrance of a Republican general mortally wounded in the Black Forest...."

"What was the general's name?"

"Joseph.... and I am his widow...."

"What, madame," exclaimed Barras, "the widow of a general, and ...."

\* Madame Tallien was then only 23 or 24 years of age. She had many lovers and many husbands, and died as Princesse de Chimay in 1831.

"And a coco-vendor, citizen director.... since one cannot live on a pension which represents 15 francs."

"Come to my audience to-morrow, citizeness: we will put that right...." And Barras added, raising his voice, to be heard by the onlookers, "I will not witness the sufferings of the widow of a brave defender of the country.... Till to-morrow...."

"I shall not fail to come, Citizen Director."

Madame Joseph, whose story I have told to the end to avoid having to return to it, went to Barras' audience, and her pension was paid with greater promptness and at the rate of 1,000 francs in specie. This favourable result was obtained, not because a general's widow had aroused the interest of the government, but because a coco-vendor had attracted the attention of the public.... Laure refused to sell her coco-rooms. She entrusted their management to a former comrade at the Opera, who had taken the veil in expiation of her sins, and had subsequently set up a tinder-shop after the suppression of the convents. The widow drew another thousand francs annually from her singular property, and thus a commerce in plain water and liquorice brought her in just as much as all the blood spilled by a general of the Republic.

All this took place in 1798: I had already long left Brunswick, and I will return to the causes which took me thence.

## CHAPTER XXX

Stockwasser's manufactory—A miniature Versailles in a tin-merchant's work-shops—Misery and pride—Louis XVIII. at Mittau—A letter from Countess Delvinaki—A glance at the Court at Mittau—I decide to resume my comb—I prepare to set out for St. Petersburg—My parting interview with Louis XVIII.

AT Brunswick, one Stockwasser owned an establishment, which has since become very famous in Germany, where were manufactured tea-caddies, tobacco-jars, sugar-basins and various vessels in painted tin, besides card-board snuff-boxes, also painted. All these articles were very exquisitely worked; they were mostly painted in oils, although this could not be very remunerative to the artists, since Stockwasser's goods were sold very cheaply.

I determined to visit this house, in which the Brunswickers displayed a certain pride, and I was very pleased that I did so. The painting-room especially possessed a curious, even eccentric physiognomy. Those at work there belonged neither to the ordinary class of artists nor to the German nation: of this I was apprised at a distance by the confused chatter that reached my ear; and when I entered the room, I recognized French faces throughout the long gallery filled with men and women engaged in painting a multitude of different subjects.

My *cicerone* explained to me that all these Rubenses on tin, all these Lebruns on papier-mâché, were so many emigrants of both sexes, who, having quarrelled with Plutus, had sought a refuge with the god of the Arts. The talents which these noble exiles had acquired in their colleges and convents as an agreeable pastime, they now turned to for their living.... But let it not be said that, while working for Stockwasser for their bread, these former frequenters of Versailles had renounced their old customs: the French have, I believe, the exclusive privilege of affecting fine airs when in a humble condition, of combining

misery with elegance, without attracting ridicule. After walking through the work-room I was convinced that our counts, our marchionesses, our barons and our presidentesses had lost nothing at Brunswick but their hundred thousands of livres a year, their diamonds and their horses and carriages.... The haughty self-sufficiency, the imperious air, the hand in the fob of the men ; the studied disdain, the patronizing look, the delicate nerves of the ladies survived in the work-rooms of Stockwasser, who was content to take pity on them so long as his tea-caddies and tobacco-jars were not too slowly decorated with Loves, Zephyrs, Hebes and Ganymedes.

You will hardly believe that, paint-brush and palette in hand, our illustrious fellow-countrymen showed themselves no less jealous at Brunswick than at Versailles to keep up the hierarchical prerogatives of their rank.... Small and great entries, stools, admissions to the King's chariots were granted and refused, but above all quarrelled over.... Nowhere, perhaps, were such magnificent castles in Spain built as in Stockwasser's humble work-rooms ; and the tangible part of it all was one small crown earned *per diem*, a frugal dinner eaten on the corner of the easel, a truckle-bed in a Brunswick garret.

On leaving this singular Court, whose dignitaries were not unlike those of the Cour des Miracles, the titles excepted, I congratulated myself upon not having met any of those noble borrowers whom I had found in London, on the Rhine, on the Danube, everywhere. It had become time for me to think of myself, and I became more and more confirmed in my intention to go to Russia, there to resume the comb, which, alone among the elements of my fortune, had never failed me.

I proceeded accordingly to Blankenburg, to take the King's commands, for the Emperor Paul I., Autocrat of All the Russias, and for the Frenchmen of high distinction who might have retired to St. Petersburg. But when I reached the little town where I had left the nomadic Court of Louis XVIII., His Majesty had just departed for the Kingdom of Prussia. I immediately repaired to Berlin ; but the King had already left. Nevertheless the successor of Frederic the Great had offered an asylum and even a pension to the French Monarch ; but either the latter was a little angry with his brother of Prussia for having with-



drawn from the coalition, or else His Majesty feared lest he should encounter the vanguard of the French armies in the neighbourhood of his retreat: he had determined to retire to Mittau in Courland. He no doubt thought that the Rhine, the Elbe, the Vistula and the Niemen were none too many to place between himself and the audacious carmagnoles.

I hastened to proceed to Mittau, and there found a letter awaiting me from the Countess Delvinski in which she enclosed a draft on a banker at Riga for the amount of the sum I had lent my friends on their flight from Poland. Of all the money I had scattered broadcast since my departure from Paris, this was the first that returned to me.

The good, kind Julie wrote me a little volume, a sort of novel, containing all the details of the reception extended to her and the count by the directorial Court. A sort of ovation was decreed to them at the Luxemburg; and it had only lain with her to become the heroine of a civic festival on the Champ de Mars, which she might have traversed, dressed as an allegorical figure of Poland, upon a car of painted canvas drawn by the Citizen Franconi's horses. The organizer of these solemnities, Captain Cuvelier,\* so well known since for his pantomimes in dialogue, with their fights with axe and poniard, had exhausted all his eloquence upon the countess to persuade her to play the part of "an heroic fatherland;" but, as she wrote to me, "I persisted in my refusal, for the simple reason that, as a native of La Chapelle, near Paris, I could not figure as a Pole without dreading the ridicule of all Paris.

"Let me tell you, as a secret," she continued, "that when my husband, immediately upon our arrival, renewed his command as a brigadier-general in the army of the Rhine, Director Barres, in spite of your friend's five-and-forty years, took such good note of her figure beneath her lancer's uniform that he took it into his head to attempt a very special and academic examination. I remarked to the too gallant Director that, having taken my part in the wars as a colonel, I begged him to forget that

\*Jean Guillaume Auguste Cuvelier de Trye, 1766—1824, first adopted a soldier's career, and then turned to the stage. Between 1793 and 1824 he produced the prodigious number of 110 plays of various descriptions. This extraordinarily fecund dramatist was nicknamed "the Crébillon of Melodrama."

there was anything of the woman left in me, and to occupy himself exclusively with the ladies of his circle, whose almost negative costume favoured the kind of examination he desired to indulge in. Barras took the hint.

"I confess nevertheless, my dear Léonard, that whenever I pass along the Boulevard du Temple, before the very modest lodging which I occupied in 1770, my heart beats very hard. Ah, of how much I think then! How happy those years seem, though they were rich in nothing but folly, voluptuousness and thoughtlessness! And when a woman who is completing her ninth lustrum has such lively memories, it is not without a certain emotion that she writes to a friend of that time.... You know, Léonard, that after forty a woman may talk of friends but not of lovers.

"Heaven, how Paris has changed from what it was! How strange to compare our macaronis of former days, with their red heels, their silver waistcoats, their spangled coats, with the fools of a new sort who walk the streets shod in the Greek buskin, heedless of the gutters; swathed in the toga of Aristides, regardless of the cold; and receiving the content of the gutters on their bare, curled heads, from respect for the head-dress of Alcibiades.

"Do you remember, Léonard, the monstrous hoops of our former great ladies of the Court, the panniers which, the farthingales aiding, were such a protection to their chastity, as every one knows? Well, the Frenchwomen of 1798 have reached the antipodes of that voluminous attire.... If you walk in the Tuileries on a fine sunny day, you can have the pleasure of examining at your ease the figures of our *merveilleuses* and the soft shades of their skin, together with every contrast you could wish for.... There is no longer any need for painters and sculptors to pay heavy fees to models for their Venuses.... the ladies pose everywhere and at all times in true academic nudity."

Louis XVIII.'s Court, in a town in chilly Courland, offered but few attractions or even comforts, and His Majesty made the sad discovery at Mittau that safety and contentment do not always go together. No longer was the Royal exile's ear caressed by the warm and balmy zephyr of the Adriatic, but by the chill blasts

of the Baltic, which hurled themselves against the thin old walls of the small, brick country-seat which he occupied. Living amid a population composed almost entirely of woollen or leather merchants, all fanatically devoted to the practice of freemasonry, the King did not find himself in a sphere in which his tastes could hope to meet with any sympathy .... There were indeed a considerable number of men of learning attached to the various schools and academies at Mittau; but the inclinations of these turned towards independence, which was not what His Majesty desired. "Where can I go," the good Prince would sometimes exclaim, "not to hear people invoke those two disordered Bacchantes whom they call Liberty and Equality?"

It was long since I had first entertained the project of going to St. Petersburg; but I had always hesitated to leave the centre of the emigration. Not that H. M. Louis XVIII. would have confirmed the promise of the patent of nobility which the Martyr King had made me: never, in the moments of his most expansive good-will, had the reigning Monarch gone so far as that.... But the less I expected to be rewarded for my perseverance in dancing attendance on the misfortunes of the Princes, the more I hesitated definitely to part from them. Those who regard self-interest as the most powerful of motives have omitted to take account of the power of self-esteem.

However, my resources in the year 1798 had diminished to such an extent, and the capital which I had placed out was invested in mortgages of so doubtful a nature, that the simplest calculation sufficed to show me that I had not enough left to live on, even by suffering privations. I saw clearly that I must philosophically resume my comb, and go to Russia to use it on the ladies there, whose head-dress had more or less attained the point where I had found it in 1769. Old and out of date for France, my talent might still, at St. Petersburg, appear young in inspiration and fresh in imagination by reviving all the fashions which had formerly sprung up beneath my hand.

One thing troubled me from the moment when this idea first took root in my head: that was the difficulty of announcing to the King my fixed intention of leaving his august person .... This I confess to-day was due to a passably ridiculous feeling of pride: I imagined that the departure of a caitiff such as I

would create a void in His Majesty's life, as though I had been a creature of any importance; as though a hair-dresser, three parts ruined, or ruined altogether for all one knew, would have made any more difference on quitting his Sovereign than a poor spaniel who gets up and goes, after amusing his master for a time by fetching and carrying.

I recognized the absurdity of my vanity when I at last summoned up courage to announce to the King that I was compelled to return to my industry and that I proposed to proceed to the Court of Paul I. with the object of endeavouring, though old, to recapture some scraps of fortune.

. "What, my poor fellow, has it come to that?" said Louis XVIII., airily enough.

"Alas, yes, Sire.... Events, as Your Majesty knows, have deceived the expectations of all of us.... and I had sown abundantly in the hope of a speedy harvest."

"Yes," replied the King, reflectively, "we have all made a blunder. I thought too late of diversions from the inside, from the centre.... Would to God I had worked the elections, enrolled the *collets noirs*,\* enlisted the sympathy of the shopkeepers by holding out hopes of a revived Court, rather than letting those Don Quixotes of the Vendée have their way, brave and devoted people without doubt, but inclined to thrust and cut in all directions, with no plan of campaign and no definite object in view.

"The 13 Vendémiare and the 18 Fructidor deceived my hopes of a Counter-Revolution, but these two Jacobin triumphs have only temporarily dispersed the firebrands of the conflagration that is imminent: they are not yet extinguished. Remember what I say, Léonard: one man alone is to be feared by our cause, and that is Buonaparte, that little general whose body could be blown over by a breath, but whose soul would brave a tempest. If he had remained in Europe we should have had great difficulty in checkmating the Revolution. But Barras, that immoral Barras, who contrary to my expectations, is prepared to barter what he calls his conscience, had fortunately lighted on the expedition to Egypt as a means of

\* Black bands became, after the murder of the King and Queen, the symbol of Royalism.

removing the hero of French public opinion.... We shall be able to operate on a large scale: Austria, terrified at the exploits of the conqueror of Italy, is already retrieving herself; the Russians, with their redoubtable Souvaroff, are under marching orders; the English fleet is blockading the French army on the Nile; the Royalist bands in the West are taking fresh courage: new regiments are being enlisted at different places.... Our affairs are going well, Léonard," added the King, rubbing his hands, "our affairs are going well, and you shall not remain long in St. Petersburg.... There will soon be crowned heads for you to dress in France...."

I could hardly believe my ears when I heard these last words.... It seemed incredible that for the Royal Family I should still be Léonard the hair-dresser, that is, *only* Léonard the hair-dresser.... How backward I still was in my political education!

## CHAPTER XXXI

I arrive at St. Petersburg—An audience of the Emperor Paul I.—The Empress Maria Feodorovna—Portrait of Paul I.—I become a coiffeur again—A picture of Russian Society—Madame Demidoff—My *bourgeois* existence—Descriptions of life in St. Petersburg—Various details.

IT has been seen how Louis XVIII. gave me, by way of provision for my journey, the hope of returning as hair-dresser to a restored Court of Versailles . . . I was to resume the thread of my career where I had dropped it in 1789: the rest was to be regarded as null and void. Thus the King seemed to think that I should recover my powder-box and powder-puff just as the noble emigrants were to be restored to their possessions, titles and privileges. Not a word of the sacrifices made during the emigration by the plebeian Léonard . . . But my confidence in the kindness of princes was not to be discouraged by these signs of indifference. “I should be wrong,” thought I, “to weigh the gratitude of these illustrious personages in the scales of my Gascon imagination: they are niggard in promises but will show themselves generous in good deeds, if I return to France in their suite; the fate of my old age will be mild and prosperous: noble hearts do not forget . . .” You shall see presently to what extent the happy expectations were realized.

I set out at last from Mittau, and made but one stage of it to St. Petersburg. The King had handed me some despatches for Paul I., impressing upon me to hand them to that Prince in person. I carried out Louis XVIII.’s intentions to the letter; and this would doubtless have been difficult for any but me, since the Czar was, for the moment, in one of those paroxysms of distrust which caused him to suspect all the world. But the name of Léonard the famous coiffeur had long been a household word at St. Petersburg: the Chevalier or the Cheva-

liére d'Éon, who was Paul's fencing-master when the latter was only a Grand Duke, had entertained His Imperial Highness with accounts of my prowess; and in the visit which he paid to Paris before the Revolution, the Northern Prince had more than once protested at the inconceivable latitude which the ladies of the Court allowed to my impertinences. His Imperial Majesty was accordingly in a position to look forward to my visit with the same curiosity which one attaches to the sight of some rare monkey... I was admitted to the Czar's presence.

I found Paul I. in his closet, seated before a desk on which were spread maps of Italy and Switzerland. I could easily see that His Majesty was following the march of Souvaroff, who was fighting the French armies. When the Emperor saw me enter between gentlemen of the Guard, like a refractory conscript between two gendarmes, he rose, came towards me, and very affably took from my hand the despatch which I brought him. He cast his eyes over it rapidly, and then tossing it on to his desk, he began to speak of me personally.

"Well, Léonard," said he, in excellent French, and as though he were addressing an old acquaintance, "so you have decided to translate the empire of hair-dressing to Russia? Like the King your sovereign, you want a throne somewhere."

"Sire, in adversity we seek consolation sometimes in chimeras."

"Ah, your sovereignty will prove no chimera here; you will be able to do a good business. Think, the Empress will protect you! I know that you have faithfully served the unfortunate Queen of France; all my nobility will follow their sovereign's example and show their appreciation of your conduct."

"I shall be indebted to your Majesty for a prosperity on which I dared not reckon...."

"Oh, you will have to purchase it, egad!.... Do you think that our ladies are free from caprices, and that your patience will not be put to every possible test?.... No, no, Léonard: to grow roses in the North of Europe you must cultivate them, and with ardour.... But you come here with a famous name: that is a great thing to begin with!"

Just then the Empress Maria Feodorovna appeared. I had only seen for a moment at Versailles this voluminous Princess, who would have been a superb woman in a country where

athletic proportions are considered a charm in the fair sex.

"Madame," said the Emperor, "this is Léonard, whose arrival was announced to us some time ago.... He brings with him the best traditions of Versailles: I hope you will employ him...."

"I will, Sire, and from to-day.... My hair is in a hideous state of disorder.... I really do not know, monsieur," continued the Empress, turning to me, "whether you can make anything of it. It is as one might say a long-neglected flower-bed, in which the plants have grown up at random.... Our Russian hair-dressers don't know how to handle a pair of scissors.... Till presently, Monsieur Léonard, do you hear, till presently."

"Madame, I am at Your Majesty's orders."

While I was speaking with the Empress, Paul I. returned to his maps, from which I presumed that my audience was finished. I approached the Emperor respectfully to take my leave.

"Your Majesty has no orders to give me for the King?" I asked.

"No," replied Paul I., curtly.

"Louis XVIII.," thought I as I made my way out, after repeated bows, to which the Czar replied with a friendly nod, "Louis XVIII. has no very fervent ally here...." I learnt later that I was not mistaken.

Paul I., whom I learnt to know well during the last three years of his life, was not a Prince constituted to understand the qualities of Louis XVIII. In his eyes a monarch's chief virtue consisted in military knowledge; and in this respect the King of France was still learning his first lessons.... As a result of this infatuation for illustrious warriors, the Czar loudly proclaimed himself an admirer of Buonaparte. This general was almost as great a hero to him as to the French Republic, and in 1798 I more than once heard the Sovereign of the North express the desire that the conqueror of Italy should take up the reins of government in France.

Paul was at the same time a man of education. He had some wit, and his judgment, when pronounced on any other matter than one upon which he was prejudiced, was rarely at fault. But as a rule the fickleness of his mood prevented him from fixing his mind sufficiently long on any question to pronounce a matured opinion. Never did a more light-headed,

capricious prince ascend a throne. You left him one evening affable, communicative, simple to familiarity; the next morning you found him hard, haughty, despotic to tyranny.

To this strange mutability of character the Emperor joined a constant, unfortunate distrust of all that surrounded him. From the very first days of his reign, and without having done anything to excite enmity, Paul became as timorous, as suspicious as Louis XI. when he retreated to Plessis-lès-Tours after one of his bloodthirsty executions. The imaginary dangers with which he was encompassed caused him to commit the greatest injustices; and from these phantoms, realities eventually arose. This was bound to be so: when a monarch disgraces, exiles and imprisons his most zealous servants, he will soon make enemies of them; and this Paul I. was soon to experience.

One thing troubled me as I returned to my hotel, and that was that almost ten years had passed since my hand rested on a woman's head, and that I was just about to make my first experiment, since my arrival in Russia, on the illustrious head of the Empress .... When I returned home, I made a pretty little girl whom I had seen with the hostess come up to my room; I begged her to let me do her hair, to which she readily consented, in return for an allowance, more than once renewed, of sweets .... After having been inactive for ten years, I found my hand a little heavy, and I had to seek for the inspiration with which my imagination used formerly to overflow. Nevertheless my hand had not lost all its cunning; and the same evening I unravelled the hair of the Empress Maria, which was long and silky and unmixed with any of those nasty white hairs which distress women so. True, the Empress was not yet thirty-nine.

Her Majesty, having regard no doubt to the clumsy fashion in which her hair had been dressed thitherto, was greatly pleased with herself when she left my hands. I saw that it would be easy for me to recapture in St. Petersburg the *vogue* which had withered in Paris beneath the blast of the revolutionary tempest. Yet I will not say much of my career as coiffeur to the Russian Court: it was but a pale copy of my first successes; a languid succession of mornings and evenings devoted exclusively to the service of the comb. Those delicious accessories

with which my life had been strewn at the Courts of Louis XV. and Louis XVI., those sweet prerogatives which my talent and my audacity had formerly gained for me, were not, and could not be, reproduced in St. Petersburg, where I was one day threatened with the knout for hinting that two or three duchesses had honoured me with their favours by way of gratuities thrown into the bargain for their coiffures....

The Russian nobility are both affable and amiable, but not in the sense which the French attach to the word. The Court of St. Petersburg has not got further than the etiquette of Louis XIV..... One laughs, in the palaces of the capital, only according to the rules of dignity, and none but the official buffoons are permitted to bring laughter to the lips of the great.... Pomp, splendour, display, these are the gods adored by the nobility on the banks of the Neva: appearances are the constant aim of the Russian nobles; to exceed others in magnificence and in prodigal folly is the object of the rivalry they continually bear towards one another.

Nothing, truly, could be less amusing than these contests of pride and vanity. Our courtiers of the olden time used to ruin themselves: but at least they derived some enjoyment from the process. If they threw their money with both hands through the windows, they had the diverting spectacle of seeing all the greedy ones below rushing to pick up their crown-pieces. The Russian women of quality, when engaged in that employment of life which everywhere forms the principal occupation of the fair sex, in the cares, or if you prefer, in the speculations of love, seem no more than the men to seek for a delight of the senses, a satisfaction of the heart.... The sentiment which, among Southern nations, is indulged with enthusiasm, with delirium, is considered by the Russian ladies a sort of ornament to their existence: one would think that they desire to display an adorer chained to their chariot in the same way as they cause a diamond to sparkle on their finger.... Observe that eye: thought sleeps in it; observe those features: they lack the mobility which betrays strength of impressions. Watch that regular and somewhat heavy walk: it proclaims a laboured intention, a careless want of decision.... It is as though in the generally handsome and well-proportioned bodies of the Russian



ladies, the soul had nowhere been able to find a little dwelling-place. I was fifty-two when I arrived in Russia, and I should have been a fool to endeavour to lay siege to the soul of the local beauties; but what I have heard about them from men younger, and consequently, in this respect, more attractive than myself, has confirmed the opinion I have just set down. In fact, after the experience I had gained in Germany, I came to the conclusion that voluptuousness, as we understand it in France, Italy and Spain, has never crossed the Rhine.

There is, however, an exception to every general rule; and I, whose experience in matters of gallantry was in Russia only obtained from hearsay, nevertheless discovered some exceptional characters. One of the first ladies whose hair I dressed at Court was the Countess Demidoff. Oh, as to that one, she was a living exemplar of French manners, strayed in the direction of the North Pole; and all the town assured me that there was nothing in the least polar about this noble lady. She herself confessed so frankly.... "One would think, my dear Léonard," she sometimes said, "that all my fellow-country-women had been brought up in those ice-palaces which in the winter they build on the Neva.... I would wager," she added, with the boisterous laugh for which she was noted, "I would even lay odds that out of twenty Russian couples picked at random, you might put eighteen to bed in a sick man's room without there being any danger of their awakening him. The atmosphere of this country overwhelms me: I promise you I shall run away to France on the day after we shall have signed peace with your Republicans."

Madame Demidoff kept her word. She went to Paris in 1801, and I believe that after that time she very rarely returned to Russia. She was a very handsome woman in the days when I used to dress her hair in St. Petersburg: her tall stature, her slim, supple figure possessed as much elegance as her features had delicacy and expression.... Madame Demidoff might have been a beautiful woman, but she did not allow herself the time to become so, so hurried was she to run through her life as also through the immense fortune \* of the count her husband.

On my return to Paris, everybody was talking of M. le Comte

\* Derived from mines and from the celebrated Toula cannon-foundries.

Demidoff. There was not a dancer of the Boulevard, not a milliner of the Rue Vivienne, not a pretty linendraper of the Passage des Panoramas, not a pupil of the Conservatoire, not one little woman from the provinces hesitating as to the career she should adopt in the capital, who was not more or less intimately acquainted with M. le Comte Demidoff.... He always had Labels posted on the tracks of all the black-eyed, neat-footed grisettes: his immense golden net never missed one of the frail virginities that trotted along the public streets, bandbox in hand, or sat sewing in their humble garret.... Monsieur showed himself yet more prodigal of life than madame.... At the present time I sometimes come across this Russian Crœsus: alas, he drags with him, in a feeble, tottering body, the ineffaceable marks of his life of pleasure; he carries the sad expression of it in his lack-lustre eye. Two tall flunkeys, but lately occupied in providing food for his vagabond passions, now support the fragile form which those passions have exhausted.... M. Demidoff carries about in Paris, where his reputation is generally known, the afflicting example of the results of incontinency: his presence is a melancholy volume of morality brought into action.

Madame la Comtesse, more delicate than the count, resembled, when seated at the banquet of life, those gluttons who love none but the most exquisite dishes, but who are not for that reason the more inclined to restrict themselves as to quantity.... Madame Demidoff also had acquired a very widespread fame when I returned to Paris, and her health seemed to have become greatly enfeebled.\*

I had no lack of occupation in St. Petersburg, and I could have done excellent business, had it been as easy for me to get paid my gold imperials or half-imperials as it was to earn them; but evil times had come upon the splendid capital in which I had taken refuge.... The fortune of the Russian nobles consists in the number of heads of peasants (*moujiks*) that they possess. The wars, in killing off this human cattle, impoverished them. Came next the colonial system, then the

\* Countess Demidoff died in 1819, in a condition of deplorable exhaustion. The count survived her many years, after raising a magnificent monument to her in the Eastern cemetery of Paris.

wars again, then the invasion.... For more than ten years misery stalked through the superb palaces that adorn the banks of the Neva.

The low and marshy position of St. Petersburg contributes greatly to bring about the lymphatic temperament, the precocious obesity, for which the ladies of the country are so particularly remarkable. The men, especially those of the better classes, are differently constituted, because their lives are less sedentary. The Russian nobles willingly undertake long voyages; their ladies rarely accompany them, and rarely desire to. Their apathy and love of repose are so great that they sometimes spend whole weeks without walking fifty paces in succession. In the winter they go out in sledges, in the summer in carriages or droskys.... As to walking out, almost never.... Not being accustomed to walking, they grow fatigued at once. You will frequently meet in St. Petersburg this or the other countess or princess who will seriously inform you that she does not know how to walk, and she will be telling the truth; for it is a fact that many a Russian woman of quality attains the age of twenty-five without having walked a league in her life.

This explains the luxurious habits, the languid tastes, and even the absence of appetite for pleasure which one remarks in Russian ladies.... They must be under the influence of a keen excitement before emerging from that positive sleep of the senses which, without any offence, might be compared to the vegetating life led by the guinea-pigs during a considerable part of the year. For instance, there are certain dances, among others the *mazurka*, which are able to induce the Russian ladies to throw off their organic calmness. After that exercise, their fibres grow tense, their veins begin to glow, their blood liquefies and flows more rapidly. Their alabaster skin becomes firm and quick: a bright flame is kindled in their eyes.... At such a moment a Russian woman becomes a desirable creature: she has then acquired all that she generally lacks in seductiveness.

There are only two seasons known in St. Petersburg: summer and winter. The two others pass so swiftly that their existence in that hyperborean clime is scarcely noticeable. The summers are ordinarily very fine, but very short. In St. Petersburg the longest days in the year last eighteen hours and a quarter; then

the nights are so bright that it is easy to read and write up to eleven o'clock at night. The evening and the early morning are cool, but the rest of the day exceedingly hot.

Snow begins to fall in the month of October: it suddenly covers the flower-beds still strewn with roses and the loveliest flowers, which Nature sprinkles lavishly at the confines of the Pole, as though to compensate the inhabitants for removing them so soon. In November the cold is very keen along the banks of the Neva, and the river is covered with floating ice. Winter is always severe in St. Petersburg. But this very rigour of the climate has a salutary effect: for while it lasts, the insalubrious atmosphere of which I have spoken becomes healthier: it is the season of the year in which fewest sicknesses reign in the capital of the Czars. It should be added that this is also the time when the passions emerge from their foggy swaddling-clothes and become pronounced and alive: in a word, winter is more fatal to chastity in St. Petersburg than elsewhere . . . What would you? The springs of the physical constitution, growing tense, often burst through the bonds of virtue and principles . . .

The shortest day at St. Petersburg lasts five hours and a half; the weather has to be but a little misty at this period of solstice, and the inhabitants of the town must burn lights all through the day.

It is a very common thing for the ice on the Neva to attain a thickness of twenty or twenty-four inches. It is then that it is hewn, as though it were stone, and that those magical ice-palaces are constructed of which travellers have written so much. The Empress Catherine in 1760 built one of these palaces on the Neva; it was fifty-two feet long by sixteen deep and twenty high. The walls were no less than three feet in thickness: which nevertheless permitted a glimpse, through their transparent partitions, of beds, chairs, tables, harpsichords, glowing hearths and lighted candles. Before this fairy monument stood pyramids, statues, two mortars and six pieces of artillery, all in ice. One of the guns was tried with four ounces of powder: the bullet bored a two-inch plank at sixty paces, and neither the cannon nor the gun-carriage was damaged.

The taste for dancing had not become general in Russia in the first ten years of the century, and it was rare, even at Court,



to spend the whole night at a ball.... People are generally very sleepy in St. Petersburg; and it is for that reason that suppers, those suppers at which cherries are served which cost a small crown apiece, pears at a louis, and pine-apples at five-hundred francs, commence very early. The Russians are not exactly epicures, but they love display at their meals as everywhere. They seek out delicate dishes, not so much because they are exquisite, as because they are dear: they have what one might call the vanity of the stomach.

Many great Russian nobles keep up, even when travelling, troops of musicians, actors and dancers; and you cannot imagine how easily they train their peasants in the practice of all these arts. This is due to the almost inconceivable powers of mimicry with which the Russian nation is gifted. A nobleman who wishes to form a troop of comedians says to one of his moujiks, "Be a marquis"; to another, "Be a hero"; to a third, "Be a king"; and the serfs lay aside their sheepskin gabardines, their hoes and axes, to don the spangled gown, to seize the sceptre of Mithridates, to arm themselves with Brutus' dagger.... Should they, however, accidentally suffer from a slow imagination, there is a universal professor in waiting, the stick, ready to create prodigies of intelligence.

I have seen in the Russian churches and chapels pictures copied from the works of the great masters by men taken from the wildest districts of the vast Empire of the Czars; and I doubt whether our most celebrated painters, if they would descend to the laborious work of copying, could produce such good results as did the rustic painters whose work I had occasion to admire. Nevertheless these artists are absolutely void of inspiration: their sole talent consists in being able to imitate with such perfect fidelity that the most expert eye would be unable to discover the slightest difference between the copy and the original.

## CHAPTER XXXII

Further descriptions—St. Peter's Day at the Palace of Petershoff—French emigrants in St. Petersburg—How to get rid of a conjugal rival—M. le Duc de Vicence—Death of Paul I.—A curled and painted corpse—Why I did not return to France in 1800—My expectations in 1814.

THE Empress Maria deigned to take a great interest in me, an interest afterwards shared by the noble and beautiful Czarina Elisabeth Alexievna, consort to the Emperor Alexander. The Autocrat Paul also showed me many kindnesses which I shall never forget, although I have had more than once to bear the brunt of those fits of ill-humour by which he often allowed himself to be carried away.

Though the Czar was very distrustful and suspicious, I received my right of free entrance to the Imperial palaces within a few months after my arrival at St. Petersburg. I am therefore able to give a brief description of them. The Winter Palace was no longer so frequently occupied by the sovereign as it had been during the reign of the Empress Catherine, that passionate woman in every sense of the word: as prescribed by glory, ambition, pride and especially love. The Winter Palace was peculiarly adapted to the intimate habits of the Semiramis of the North: it communicates with the Hermitage, which she favoured, and the latter was adjacent to the theatre, which under her reign was always provided with an excellent company of comedians. All this array of contiguous buildings, erected on the bank of the Neva, produces a very imposing effect, although when examined in detail it offends the sight. The Winter Palace covers an immense area; but its architecture, which is irregular and overloaded with decoration, provokes the criticism of the most indulgent connoisseurs.

The Marble Palace \* is in no better taste: it is notable for many gross mistakes, such as columns and pillars of different orders,

\* Burnt down in 1838.

although almost touching one another, and windows of different sizes in the same room. An effort was made to redeem the artistic defects of this edifice by sheer magnificence: it displays a wealth of bronze, marble and rare stones, and the furniture is exceedingly rich and is said to have cost ten millions of francs.

The Palace of Petershoff, on the Bay of Cronstadt, ten miles from St. Petersburg has been greatly beautified since the accession of the Emperor Alexander, in memory of Peter the Great, for whom it was built by the French architect Leblond. The road leading from the capital to this pleasure displays, in fine weather, the most smiling and animated aspect. It is bordered on either side by elegant villas and enchanting gardens, in which the nobility take advantage of the all too short summer heat to dispel the remembrance of the rigours of the climate.

Every year, in honour of the illustrious founder of Peterhoff, the festival of St. Peter is celebrated here with the greatest brilliancy.... It is the Longchamps of St. Petersburg, but a masked Longchamps, which renders the spectacle as animated as it is picturesque. Four or five thousand persons of both sexes come from the capital to assist at this solemnity. At nightfall the palace, the gardens, the canals and the yachts are suddenly illuminated. In all the rooms and in every part of the garden are refreshments in abundance; and at two o'clock in the morning a number of long tables are laid out upon which a splendid supper is served. The guests take their places in turns; the empty dishes are immediately replaced until all the visitors have supped. This prolongs the repast until daybreak.

Montplaisir is another little country-seat, built in the Dutch style by Peter the Great. He occupied it frequently, and they still show the bed which he shared in his homely way with the brown Catherine I., whom he made an Empress, and who showed after his death that she understood the art of reigning. Montplaisir lies at the end of the Petershoff gardens, upon the Gulf of Finland.... This position delighted the conqueror of Charles XII.: he loved the sound of the gulf, which was as stormy as his own character.

As a rule, the French emigrants in St. Petersburg did not remain faithful to the Russian capital; nor was the inhospitable climate the only drawback which drove them away. These emi-

grants consisted principally of dressmakers, artists and teachers of both sexes. The actresses, and particularly the dancers, were on the crest of this wave of ambitious travellers: it was at St. Petersburg that I first saw Mademoiselle Georges, then in all the brilliancy of her striking youth and beauty. Next to the ladies of the theatre came the milliners and linendrapers.... When unmarried, they enjoyed, oh ! the most delightful destinies: they became baronesses and countesses, sometimes in name as well as in deed ; but married, it was a different thing: the great in Russia have never been able to endure the presence of conjugal rivals by their mistresses' side. A husband who followed his wife from Paris might give as many evidences of a philosophic temperament as he pleased, he remained an eyesore to the titular lover. To get rid of him was the simplest operation : four tall Cossacks made their way to his residence, carried him off, put him into a postchaise with a decent provision of roubles, and whip up, coachman, for France !

During the reign of the Emperor Napoleon, these little feudal acts frequently took place under the very eyes of the handsome Duc de Vicence,\* the French Ambassador; but he had no time to take cognisance of them, the Emperor Alexander was too amiable with him. The diplomat brought over from Paris such delicious fal-lals for the Empress Elisabeth, and that sovereign, so good, so kind, whose very voice was a caress, thanked him with such graciousness, that he could not find the leisure to interest himself on behalf of the milliners' expelled husbands: nor did those young ladies ever ask him to.

Paul I. died suddenly, as everyone knows, in the month of March, 1801. Many conjectures have been hazarded as to the cause of this unexpected death; and in the interest of my publisher, if I ever have one, I shall not repeat one of them . . . † Certain books are treated, on their arrival in Russia, with as scant courtesy as that extended to the milliners' husbands; and

\* Armand Augustin Louis de Caulincourt, Duc de Vicence, 1773—1827, a Buonapartist general not without distinction, was appointed Ambassador to St. Petersburg in 1807. In 1811 he took part in the Moscow campaign, and was subsequently sent on various missions to the Allied Sovereigns, before whom he pleaded the interests of the King of Rome. He left interesting memoirs of the First Empire, published between 1837 and 1840 under the title of *Souvenirs du duc de Vicence*.

† Paul I. was strangled by some of his nobles on the 23rd of March, 1801.

I should be in despair if mine, presuming that book there will be, should be placed on the index of the director of police, a functionary of whom I beg to declare myself the very humble servant.

I will content myself, therefore, with saying that the late Paul I. was an emperor endowed with more than the ordinary allowance of personal hideousness, and that he did not recover, after his death, a nobility of feature with which he had not been favoured in life. Nevertheless, it was necessary that, according to custom, he should be exhibited before the eyes of the people; and means were sought to diminish as much as possible the effect of the rapid and revolting decomposition of His defunct Majesty's features. I was sent for to the Palace to advise upon this expedient. When I stood in presence of the corpse, I realized that the alteration in the face was due rather to the actual colour of the skin than to any displacement of the muscles, and I thought that with the aid of a little white and rouge, cunningly applied, I could succeed in giving a more life-like colour to this dead flesh. I next brushed up and curled the Emperor's hair; and in the end I succeeded in restoring this face, in which decomposition had already begun its hideous work, so well, that Paul I. was actually less ugly on his state bed of death than he had been while living.

I had just reached my fifty-fifth year when I thus set the last touch to the edifice of my reputation. I had followed the career of a hair-dresser in all its ramifications; I had distinguished myself in the invention of every style of head-dress; no shade, no texture of hair had escaped the exercise of my art; but one thing was wanting to achieve my glory: the exploit of dressing the hair and painting the face of a corpse. This last complementary feat I achieved on the 24th of March, 1801.

I have said enough of my sixteen years' sojourn in St. Petersburg to show with what great satisfaction I learnt in 1814 that I could return to France, as I had so long desired. I cannot deny that my country had been open to me ever since the famous amnesty of 1800, and my readers will understand that, Gascon though I was, I did not consider myself of sufficient importance to assume any airs towards the Imperial Government. The fact that I did not then return to France was

due to considerations of less serious policy. Wherever I might establish myself, the misfortune of the times would compel me to live upon my comb. Now I said to myself, "What should I do in a Court that dresses its hair, male and female, like Titus? I am too old now to become the supreme arbiter of hair-dressing in Paris. During my absence, Michalon, Caron and Armand have sprung up from the crowd, and have fashioned their style upon the military habits of the period. I dressed the ladies' hair in an embroidered silk coat with point lace cuffs ; they, in a hunting-frock and spurs. I drove to my clients in a carriage and pair; they ride on horseback : there is now in the capital of the French Empire a corps of equestrian hair-dressers, while I have not been seen in the saddle since my melancholy first experience in horsemanship on the road from Paris to Montmédy in 1791." I argued thus, and remained in St. Petersburg until 1814.

But then the return of the Bourbons gave me fresh and more smiling hopes. "It is no longer," said I, "Léonard the coiffeur whom H.M. Louis XVIII., will reward: it is the faithful Royalist who has given proofs of unlimited devotion in the services which he has rendered not only to the late King and Queen, but also to the reigning monarch and his august brother. Among the many appointments which will now be in his gift, His Majesty is no doubt reserving some honourable and lucrative place for his old servant Léonard, for his banker at Verona. Ah, I shall be a happy man in France, and I shall at least find in my dear native land a corner in which to lay my mortal remains." And when this flowery, gilded perspective opened out before me, I quitted St. Petersburg almost without regret, although I left more than one object of affection behind me... But I hoped that the richly embroidered mantle in which I was mentally wrapping my destiny would prove large enough also to cover those whom I loved. You shall see how this fine dream was realized.

## CHAPTER XXXIII

A word on Monseigneur le Duc d'Angoulême's honeymoon—A glance at the Tuileries in 1814—And at new Paris—M. le Comte d'Artois' memory—I receive an employment at Court.

IN crossing Courland, I passed Mittau, and visited the little country-house which the King had inhabited, with all the veneration of a pilgrim to Mecca visiting the tomb of the Prophet. I there found a woman of mature years who had waited upon His Majesty and more particularly upon Madame la Duchesse d'Angoulême at the time of her marriage. This talkative Courlander told me all the details of the ceremony, which she had followed closely, she said, from the nuptial benediction to well beyond the putting to bed of the bride. I will not repeat here the singularly picturesque and outspoken remarks which were made to me; I will only say that they concluded with the question, "Has Her Royal Highness any children?" I answered no, and she replied, "I would have wagered on it." That woman must have listened more than once at the doors during the first married months of Monseigneur le Duc d'Angoulême.

On my arrival in Paris, the approaches to the Tuileries were so greatly obstructed by solicitants who either belonged to the legions of the faithful or promised to enrol themselves that I was unable to penetrate to Monseigneur le Comte d'Artois, whom I wished to see first, hoping that he would deign to present me to the King. A whole week passed before I could even catch a glimpse of His Royal Highness across that compact crowd.

The absolute chaos which prevailed in Paris at that time has been too often described by capable pens that it should be necessary for me to add to their narratives. I will content myself with saying that the physiognomy of our capital seemed strange to me; not because it had become the gathering-place

of every ambition: this I expected; but because of the unspeakable changes which had supervened in the last twenty-six years over the habits and tastes of the capital to which I was at last returning. Everything combined to astonish my eyes and ears. On the site which I remembered as that of a duke's mansion, I found a row of booths where they sold slippers and eau-de-Cologne. Beneath the cloister of the convent of the Filles-Saint-Thomas, where I had seen the good nuns chanting their matins and telling their beads between their fingers, I now beheld wanton courtesans promenading between two rows of well-lighted shops, provoking the passers-by with lewd remarks and alluring gestures. On the boulevard, the gardens of the Hôtel de Montmorency have disappeared: the Passage des Panoramas takes their place. No more leafy shades, no more statues and vases, no more cunningly laid-out flower-beds, no more Chinese pagoda, sixty-six feet high, with its thousand little bells shaken by the evening breeze: but elegant shops, where diamonds gleam, or cashmere and silky stuffs unfold themselves, or the rakish hat seems to smile to the little dancer who longs to purchase it, while the young Russian officer, with chest puffed out, who is giving the young *bayadère* his arm, pretends not to see the hint she gives him. Further on, the pastrycook's art, at whose development I sometimes stand astounded, displays a thousand sweetmeats.... Near at hand the boot-blacks, constituted into a trade, polish the boots of men in a boudoir fit for a *petite maîtresse*, and delicately handle the brush with a hand issuing from the sleeve of a black coat.... I read over the door of this establishment, "*Aux Artistes réunis*".... When the boot-black lays aside his brush, and the boot-blacked leaves the velvet seat upon which he has been languidly reclining, I will defy you to distinguish the master from the servant.

In the streets, a thousand equipages are to be seen, splendidly emblazoned; but the coats of arms displayed to my view are all new to me: in ten years the Empire has gathered sufficient lustre to replace the heraldic achievements of fourteen centuries.

I behold nothing but contrasts. The depot of the French Guards, in whose courtyard I saw each morning from my window the sergeant inspecting his men, is now replaced by elegant houses;

instead of the square-cut faces, the heads coated with a layer of pommade and powder which I formerly looked out on, I now see smiling little milliners, with black eyes, white teeth, and throats like nightingales.... The French Guards have become generals, their sergeants marshals of the Empire.

Nowadays, the nobility are educated : the sons of the counts of the Empire know Latin and Greek, they have taken their bachelor's degree ; their sisters play the piano, paint landscapes in oils, write verses which are read at the Athénée, and know how to spell.

In the shops in the Rue Saint-Denis, all the tradesmen know arithmetic, keep their books by double entry, write like Roland, and sign their names with a flourish.

There are no cobblers in Paris now, no bakers, grocers, nor wineshop-keepers, but "booterries," "bakeries," "groceries," and "wine-dealers." It would no longer be possible for the corps of wig-makers to bring an action against my colleagues, for there are no longer any wig-makers in Paris : there is none but hair-dressers, although I have not yet seen a single head-dress.

Formerly you met none but red heels at the Tuilleries : to-day you hear nothing but the clatter of spurs. They hum the refrain of the latest comic opera there, and they swear like Grenadiers, whether they have been so or not.

But there is one compensation. Before the Revolution, the cafés were gloomy resorts, painted in grey, with wretched looking-glasses, clumsy tables, cumbrous benches, a great stove with an enormous copper pipe to it, ending in a huge bowl of the same metal. At the counter sat a woman, generally ugly, in a cap of doubtful cleanliness, with her bosom concealed behind a loosely-tied kerchief ; while a waiter in a filthy apron, a corkscrew hanging from his belt, served the customers slowly beneath the light of a smoky lamp.

In 1814, every café has become a little temple glittering with gilding, brilliant with mirrors and paint, and flooded with light. The counter has become an altar.... for the woman sitting behind it, of intoxicating beauty, and dazzling with the splendour of jewellery and dress, receives from an eager crowd the homage due to a divinity. True that each night she *descends*.

to become the Venus of some Adonis or the Phoebe of some Endymion. . . .

I had ample time for astonishment and admiration before being admitted to the presence of M. le Comte d'Artois; but at last His Royal Highness received me, and promptly told me that I had become very ugly.

You will perhaps find it difficult to believe that I was pleased with this negative compliment which the Prince thought fit to pay me; but you will understand when I tell you that to my mind this proved that Monsieur remembered that I had not always been ugly, and that consequently he had a memory. You can easily guess why I was charmed to learn this.

Delighted to find that the King's brother possessed that powerful memory which I feared he had lost, I told him in pretty clear phrases that hair-dressers did not make their fortune in Russia, especially when they resumed the comb at fifty-two and continued using it till they were sixty-eight. His Royal Highness said nothing to the contrary; but whether his memory had overstrained itself when recollecting that I had once been good-looking, or that it was incapable for the moment of remembering me to better purpose, I left this audience and several others without obtaining anything from Monsieur.

At last His Royal Highness deigned to grant me the post of doorkeeper to his private apartments. . . . There was a wide gulf between this employment and the patent of nobility promised me by Louis XVI.; but the King had as yet only smiled to me from a distance, and I thought I caught the reflection of a kindly recollection in his smile. . . . I waited and hoped.



## CHAPTER XXXIV

Doubtful debts—The official of the civil list—Count and Countess Delvinaki—Lucette reappears upon the scene—A second Opéra-Comique theatre—My efforts to obtain the privilege of opening it.

IN the month of June, 1814, I succeeded in obtaining several consecutive audiences of the King. His Majesty always received me with kindness, but my position remained unchanged: I was doorkeeper to Monsieur until 1818. Whenever His Majesty came across me in my black coat and with the chain round my neck, both before and after the journey to Ghent, I was always honoured with his friendly words and his gracious smile. The Prince and Madame la Duchesse d'Angoulême also displayed the greatest interest in me, in words: but my situation became no more prosperous.

One morning, on waking, it struck me that I might give a hint as to the old debt due to me to an official of considerable power in matters of the Civil List. I had daily opportunities of seeing this person, who was always very affable to me; and I speedily decided to speak to him of my former functions as banker to the Royal family, feeling certain that I had hit upon a happy thought.

One day when he came to wait upon the Prince, I told him that I wished to speak with him for a moment, if he would tell me when it would be most convenient for him.

"Why, my dear Monsieur Léonard," he replied, "I can hear what you have to say at once, since I am here."

"That is too good of you, monsieur le comte."

"Not at all, not at all, pray go on."

"I will take advantage, then, of your kind permission, monsieur le comte," said I, leading this high official to the embrasure of a window. And I told my story to him as briefly as

possible, giving him a little memorandum of the sums I had long ago lent the Princes, and concluding by asking him if he would deign to bring my matter before the King.

The official wagged his head several times before replying, and bit his nails, after the fashion of those who seek a good excuse without finding one. At last he said:

"It's a bad business, my dear Monsieur Léonard. I have no doubt that the King and the Princes of his family have every intention of paying, sooner or later, the debts which they contracted during the emigration; but I fear that at present your demand would be deucedly premature: I will go further, I think it would be dangerous."

"What, dangerous?"

"Well, yes! At Court, as elsewhere, the best way of conveying that a request is considered inopportune is to get angry at it. Listen, you are a discreet man; I will give you an insight into the matter in question... Monsieur le Comte d'Artois had a creditor in England who for a long time displayed the greatest patience and had even perhaps resigned himself to a loss, but who has become very pressing since His Royal Highness has taken his place on the first step of the Throne... That is just what I have now come to discuss with Monsieur. I have had more conversations with him on this subject, and up to the present I have never been able to get a word out of him which I could convey to the anxious Englishman."

"That I can imagine, monsieur le comte: His Royal Highness has many calls upon him; he is perhaps pressed: and I should refrain from reminding him of a little claim which I have upon him personally. But the King..."

"The King, my dear Léonard, is much worse..."

"Really?"

"Listen, I will tell you of some one you know: I have lying on my desk the properly authenticated claim of assigns of your old friend, Mademoiselle Bertin, to whom Madame de Provence owed about 60,000 francs. What should you think the King replied when I mentioned it to him? Parodying the Duc d'Orléans' remark when he became Louis XII.,\* he said, smiling,

\* *Vide Supra*, footnote p. 127, vol. I.

it is true, ‘The King of France does not pay the debts of the Comte de Provence. The jest is so merry, our good King thinks, that he repeats it to me whenever the question crops up of other debts of the old days.’

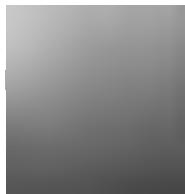
“But mine dates back to a time when His Majesty was already reigning.”

“You mistake, Léonard: where his debts are concerned, the King only commences his reign in 1814. Believe me, do not touch that string for the present: it would make a most unwelcome sound in the King’s ear. Have patience: better times may come, and then we can bring the matter up again... I will tell you when the proper moment arrives...” And so saying, the official of the civil list, gently recalling me to my functions as doorkeeper, begged me to open Monsieur’s door for him. I did so, thanking him for his advice.

Thus was shattered the beautiful castle in Spain which I had built up one morning on awaking. I regretted it vastly, but what could I do?

I had found many of my old acquaintances in Paris, and many had striven to be of use to me. Others, whose credit had fallen with the Empire, were only able to offer me a cordial welcome. Among those whose purse as well as their hearts was opened to me so soon as I arrived in Paris, I must mention Count and Countess Delvinski. The brave Pole had received promotion, crosses, titles, gifts and wounds on every battle-field to which he had followed the Emperor; but of all this there remained nothing but his pension, which he feared he should see reduced, and his scars, which he was quite certain of preserving undiminished. The count had gone to reside with his wife in the valley of Montmorency.\* Julie, who had attained her sixty-eighth year, was younger than the general who was not yet fifty-five. After having danced at the Opera, reigned in a fashion at Norkitten, mounted artificial flowers in London, and fought in Poland, she now pruned her fruit-trees and grew her cabbages in the valley of Montmorency. Never had I seen a woman more practically philosophical nor more resigned to the fickle caprices of Fortune.

\* Ten miles from Paris.



"There is only one thing I cannot get used to," said Julie to me one day as we were walking in her garden, while the general, reclining in a long-chair and resting one of his legs, which had been frost-bitten in Russia, on a stool, smoked cigar upon cigar in a sad reverie.

"What is that, countess, what is it that you cannot get used to?" I asked my old friend, with an interest full of the still delightful memories of our former intimacy.

"I cannot get used to growing old, Léonard.... And Laure, what has become of her?"

"What I expected.... she has turned religious."

"What are we coming to!"

"Yes, the wife of General, or if you prefer, of Father Joseph, has just entered one of the convents which Louis XVIII. has authorized to serve as an asylum for some hundreds of old women who have not your privilege, Julie, of remaining young while ageing, and who having nothing more agreeable left to do on earth, start at a gallop on the road to Heaven, to make up for the time devoted to ambling in the opposite direction."

"I assure you, Léonard, that Laure has no time to lose."

I had also found again in Paris another person who had been very dear to me, and who had no intention of taking the veil, like Laure, nor of planting cabbages, like Julie: I mean Lucette, that third volume in the chronicle of my fondest loves. This charming Parisian was reaching the age at which, the older one grows, the younger one pretends to be. Lucette only confessed to thirty-seven, although I could not accept the reduction of the six years out of which she cheated her adorers: for she still had adorers. Lucette enjoyed tolerably easy circumstances, composed of spoils of the Republic, the Consulate, the Empire and the commencement of the Restoration: as one would say a harlequin destiny, richly spangled.

The daughter of my former porter still frequented the public offices every day: she knew all their corridors, all their secret doors, all the small sofas used by the chiefs of offices, all the large, soft sofas used by the chiefs of departments. Her writing-desk was always full of blank audience-permits, just as M. de Sartines' used to be full of blank *lettres de cachet*; and all the porters and messengers were devoted to her, and so soon as one of



the latter saw her going in to one of the chief clerks, he knew, without being told, that that clerk was "engaged with the Minister."

Under the Empire, Lucette used to say, "My dear duke" to Fouché, \* and she never addressed Regnault de Saint-Jean-d'Angély † except as "my little count...." Nevertheless I thought that the latter was a man of good stature; but women have their own ideas of proportion.

Lucette retained for me all her good-heartedness of old; she had loved the brilliant Léonard as his mistress; she liked the old Léonard as a friend. One morning when I called upon her, her servant had hardly announced my name before she cried, "Come here, Papa Léonard," and she tapped with her hand upon the sofa on which she was sitting beside a middle-aged man, bedizened with jewellery like a dowager of the Rue Saint-Dominique. And she continued, so soon as I was seated:

"Do you ever pass the Théâtre Feydeau, which used to belong to you, without experiencing a deep emotion?"

"Truly, no, madame; the sight of that theatre always gives me a great pain at my heart."

"And has it never entered your mind, simple man that you are, that there was some compensation due to you?"

"Ah, my child, I have no right to look to Louis XVIII. for it."

"And why not, monsieur? I hold, on the contrary, that it is just he who owes it to you. Was it not for his family that you left France? What am I saying? Have you not made personal sacrifices for His Majesty himself?"

"No doubt, my dear Lucette; but all that is almost forgotten: I have noticed, generally, that everyone concerned in the emigration lost his memory on crossing the Channel, just as much as though that branch of the sea had been the Lethe of my debtors."

"Very well; but supposing the King could make your fortune without disbursing one louis d'or?"

"Ah, nonsense."

"Yes, my dear Léonard. A big Royal sign-manual, at the bottom of a little order ten lines long, and we recapture the

\* Joseph Fouché, the important police-minister, was created Duc d'Otranto by Napoleon.

† Michel Louis Étienne Regnault de Saint-Jean-d'Angély, 1781—1819, Counsellor of State, Count of the Empire, etc., etc.

fortune you have lost. Listen to me: the French are just as they always were; they want sights, they want many sights, even when they have no bread to eat. Now that the great theatre of war, in which each was an actor in his turn, is closed for a good number of years, naturally the play within four walls must atone for what we have lost in the open air. The theatre, therefore, has become a subject of speculation, and our fondness for emotions is already being quoted on the Bourse. Now it is certain that a second Opéra-Comique theatre would do better business now than our Théâtre de Monsieur did twenty-six or twenty-seven years ago; but a privilege is necessary before opening a second Opéra-Comique, and that privilege is due to you, uncontestedly due to you: it is only a question of asking for it. Monsieur de Provence is now King of France, and he cannot refuse this slight favour to the former proprietor of his favourite theatre."

"And the building, where is it?"

"In the quarries of Arcueil; but do not bother about that. As soon as you have the order in your pocket, monsieur here," said Lucette, nodding to the man in the diamonds, "will place two millions of francs at your disposal."

I confess I was so smitten with the probability of success that I rose on the spot, took my hat, and hastened to the Pavillon de Marsan to speak to M. le Comte d'Artois of the privilege which it seemed so easy to obtain.

## CHAPTER XXXV

The family council at the Pavillon de Marsan—Petitions and their usual fate—The magical effects of a dinner—I become Orderer-in-Chief of State Funerals—My installation.... Léonard at the funeral of the Prince de Condé—Death of Léonard.

WHEN I reached the Pavillon de Marsan, the moment seemed favourable for speaking to Monsieur: he was with Monseigneur le Duc and Madame la Duchess d'Angoulême, who had both assured me that they took the greatest interest in me; I felt that I should get my privilege in a trice. His Royal Highness had deigned to grant me the right of entering his apartments at all times, independently of my functions as his usher; and I accordingly entered the drawing-room in which the illustrious personages were sitting, and told them with respectful assurance that I had come to solicit their kind recommendation to His Majesty.

"What is it about, Léonard?" asked Monsieur, affably.

"Your Royal Highness will perhaps deign to remember that I was at one time the owner of the Théâtre de Monsieur, which has now become the Théâtre Feydeau."

"And national property," interrupted the Prince.

"Alas, yes, Monseigneur, and unfortunately there is no recovering it."

"Oh, oh, oh," replied Monsieur, "how quickly you make up your mind, Master Léonard.... But to return to what you were going to ask me."

"This is my case, Monseigneur. I have just been told that it would be an excellent speculation to found a second Opéra-Comique theatre, and that if I were so fortunate as to obtain a privilege, the rest would be very easy...."

"Easy to build a theatre which would cost fifteen to eighteen

hundred thousand francs!" cried M. le Duc d'Angoulême. " Who told you that?"

" A person who is holding two millions at my disposal, against the sight of the Royal order."

There was a moment's silence in the room. The three Royal personages exchanged questioning looks. M. le Duc d'Angoulême picked his nose with his customary activity, while the Princess crossed her legs alternately one over the other, in sign of impatience, thus allowing me to see that they were very well made. It was she who was the first to reply to my question.

" What, Monsieur Léonard, do you wish to embark upon a theatrical enterprise?" said Madame d'Angoulême, with the loud voice which she made no effort to moderate whenever she was displeased with anything. " You are wrong.... there are quite enough theatres in Paris."

" There are even too many," added Monsieur, " and they are so many meeting-houses of the opposition, Jacobin or Buona-partist, in which they proclaim every night the acts and deeds of the Revolution and what they call the glories of the Empire."

" That's true, that's true," said M. le Duc d'Angoulême. " There is not a flighty farce performed nowadays but it provokes either revolutionary or Imperialist sympathies."

" But those sympathies are nowhere to be met with," I hastened to reply, hoping to forward my cause with a little speculative flattery. " Your Royal Highness cannot believe that in the bosom of a paternal government the French can regret a state of affairs which decimated their families once a year."

" Master Léonard," exclaimed Monsieur, " I regret to see one of our faithful servants, a man of a religious tendency, at least I hope so, thinking of becoming a theatrical manager." \*

" I do not wish to become a manager, mon Prince: I have not the knowledge to become so, for that matter. I only propose to profit by the privilege."

" And thus to add to the number of schools of scandal and immorality," said Madame d'Angoulême, in the sharp, dry tone in which she used to show her great displeasure.

\* The Duchesse de Gontaut, in her memoirs, dates the Comte d'Artois' moral conversion to the death of the Vicomtesse de Polastron, his last mistress, and to her death-bed appeals, of which the duchess gives a very graphic description. This occurred at Brompton, during the English period of the emigration.

"What do you think of it, Berry?" asked Monsieur le Comte d'Artois of that Prince, who had just come in and who had heard the end of the conversation.

"Well, really, Sir, I do not think that the King's government can well be compromised because there is one theatre the more in Paris. You know my way of looking at these things: the more we give way to the tastes of the French, and the less we drive them out of their habits and preferences, the more they will love us. Besides, if Léonard is refused the privilege of a second Opéra-Comique, another will obtain it; because ministers will always make Kings sign documents so long as commissions and bonuses continue to keep up the persuasive eloquence of statesmen. And then this lucrative enterprise will perhaps fall into the hands of some ultra-liberal, who will turn his theatre into a club, after His Majesty has refused the same favour to a good and faithful servant."

"Oh, as for you, Monsieur le Duc," said Madame d'Angoulême, with a meaning smile, "your decided taste for the theatres is well known, and you would be quite happy to see them multiplying."

"Why not, Madame, since it pleases the people among whom we live? For if God gives us the right to govern them, there is surely nothing to oppose our doing so, as much as possible, without contradicting all their inclinations."

"Really, Monsieur de Berry, you are speaking like a member of the Left in the Chamber of Deputies."

"That will do, my children," said Monsieur, just in time to prevent a biting reply from his son Charles Ferdinand, who sometimes came and played at opposition in the Pavillon de Marsan. Then turning to me with some humour, His Royal Highness continued, "As for you, Léonard, since you are bent upon your Opéra-Comique, draw up a petition to the Minister of the Interior . . . we shall see that it is supported."

After this reply, which did not impress me as very reassuring, I bowed and withdrew.

I saw Lucette that evening, and told her of what had taken place at the palace.

"You will receive no support from the Royal Family," she said, suddenly: "Madame la Duchesse d'Angoulême has spoken

against your request, and that is sufficient . . . It is really a pity that M. le Duc de Berry has not a preponderating voice in the council; he understands the period we live in, and knows that the theatre is one of its necessities, even apart from the price he sets upon his facilities for throwing his handkerchief to the dancers of the Opéra . . . But it is no use speaking of that: in the Pavillon de Marsan it is his illustrious sister-in-law who takes the chair, and we shall have some trouble in counteracting the veto which she is sure to pronounce against your privilege. However, I won't throw up the sponge." And parodying Monsieur's phrase, Lucette said, with dignity, "Draw up a petition to the Minister of the Interior . . . we shall see that it is supported."

I had renewed acquaintance in Paris with Madame T., the kind-hearted dealer in artificial flowers who in London had made herself the Providence of emigrants and aged priests. Her youngest son, whom I had left in London in 1792, trotting through his mother's shop, astride on a stick, was now a superior officer, broad-shouldered, his skin tanned by the heat of the camps. The Restoration had reduced him to that congruous portion which is known as half-pay. I should never have recognized the London child in the veteran of the Grand Army; it was he who introduced himself, shaking hands with me as with an old friend of the family, whose adventures he had heard related many a time by the maternal fireside.

When I had explained my project to M. T., he was kind enough to undertake to draw up my first petition, and even to have its progress through the ministry watched by one of his friends who happened to have a post in the very office in which it would be examined. To this first petition it was necessary that I should add a second, because I had had the foolish idea of handing it to the Minister myself, and it had got lost when M. T.'s friend came to look for it. I learnt later that my petition had come to light in a porcelain vase on the audience-room, together with some twenty others which His Excellency had received the same day. My duplicate application did not go into a funeral receptacle of this kind: on the recommendation of the clerk of whom I have spoken, and upon the urgent solicitations of Lucette, monsieur the chief put it into a nice clean envelope on which he wrote, in his finest hand,

"Privilege for a second Opéra-Comique," and left it on his desk. There it slept peacefully for some four months, what time many letters came to keep it company; and when Lucette, who was bent on stealing a march on the Pavillon de Marsan, came to speak to monsieur the chief in my favour, he replied, pointing to the immovable bundle of documents, "I am keeping M. Léonard's matter before me." And he spoke the truth: he could not sit down to his desk without seeing my papers... but that was all...

One day Lucette advised me to stimulate the zeal of my inactive reporter by a dainty dinner at one of the most famous taverns in the town. Dinners were at that time an universal medium of seduction, transaction and conclusion: people dined electorally, diplomatically, administratively, and even judicially.

I accordingly invited the man of the report with two or three of his colleagues, M. T., and Lucette to a delicate banquet at the Café Riche. The office-chief was both *gourmand* and *gourmet*: he found the dishes exquisite, the iced champagne he thought delicious, and the next morning my report was made. Lucette hastened to give me this good news, and told me that she would see the Minister, so that he might hold himself in readiness if necessary to oppose the resistance of the Pavillon de Marsan.

A fortnight passed, and I heard nothing of the report submitted to the Minister nor of the proposed order, which I had heard was to be drawn up at once.

At last, one morning when I came to do my service as usher, Monsieur came to the door of his room and beckoning me in, told me he had some good news for me.

"Your business is settled, my dear Léonard," said His Royal Highness.

"Has the King deigned to sign the order?"

"It was not necessary, and you receive...."

"The privilege to establish a second Opéra-Comique," I interrupted, carried away by an outburst of gratitude.

"No, the post of Orderer-General of State Funerals."

"Your Royal Highness is right, I feel, to laugh at a man of seventy-three who begs for an authorization to conduct a theatrical enterprise; but old age has its needs...."

"I am not jesting, Léonard; you are the Orderer-General of State Funerals: the place carries a salary of twelve thousand francs, with no trouble, without even any functions . . . a real sinecure. As to your privilege, you must not think of that any more: it gave rise to scruples, you see, at the palace; and besides it seemed, I don't know why, that your request greatly annoyed M. le Duc d'Aumont . . ."

"Ah, I understand!"

"And finally, you also had a formidable competitor . . . at the same time as yourself, they were petitioning for a fifth or a sixth comedy theatre. Some dramatic author or other was clever enough to persuade Madame la Duchesse de Berry to speak to the King in your rival's favour . . . He received the preference . . . I repeat, you must think of that no longer."

These last words were spoken in a tone that admitted of no reply. I saw this and was silent for a moment in order to enable myself to give a natural air to my transition from disappointment to gratitude. Then I answered:

"In all this I owe Your Royal Highness the sincerest thanks; for not only were you so good as to support my petition, but when you saw that success was impossible, you deigned to take the trouble to obtain for me a place more in conformity with my age and my incapacity . . . I lay all my gratitude at Your Royal Highness's feet."

"Say no more, Léonard; you were always devoted to my family; I even 'believe' that I have formerly been under a personal obligation to you . . . You can always rely upon me . . . Good-day, my friend, good-day."

I understood that these last words were the dismissal of monsieur the Orderer-in-Chief of the State Funerals. I left His Royal Highness and went to the Hôtel de Ville, where I received the papers containing my appointment.

The next day I was installed by the lugubrious administration with all the ceremonial due to a high dignitary: like a marshal of France, who has come to take over the command of an army, I passed in review, in a large courtyard, all the staff who were to be under my orders . . . Those long files of mourners, that staff of men in black coats, crape hat-bands, and weepers, and those batteries of hearses which defiled before me had certainly

not the magnificence of a review of the Royal Guards ; and yet this curious inspection possessed a certain romantic character : it would undoubtedly have inspired a modern Young with one of those funereal descriptions which make the delight of the English.

At the conclusion of this ceremony, those who took part in it offered me a splendid dinner, at which we were very gay ; in the evening they took me to the Opera. Which proved to me that these gentlemen, although in daily contact, as it were, with the dead, none the less knew how to live.

Nevertheless, when I returned home, I gave way to much reflection of a profoundly philosophic character : when one is seventy-three years of age and has seen much of the world, one is always by way of being a philosopher.... And undoubtedly there was a very decided grotesqueness about the motley series of events which had composed my life.

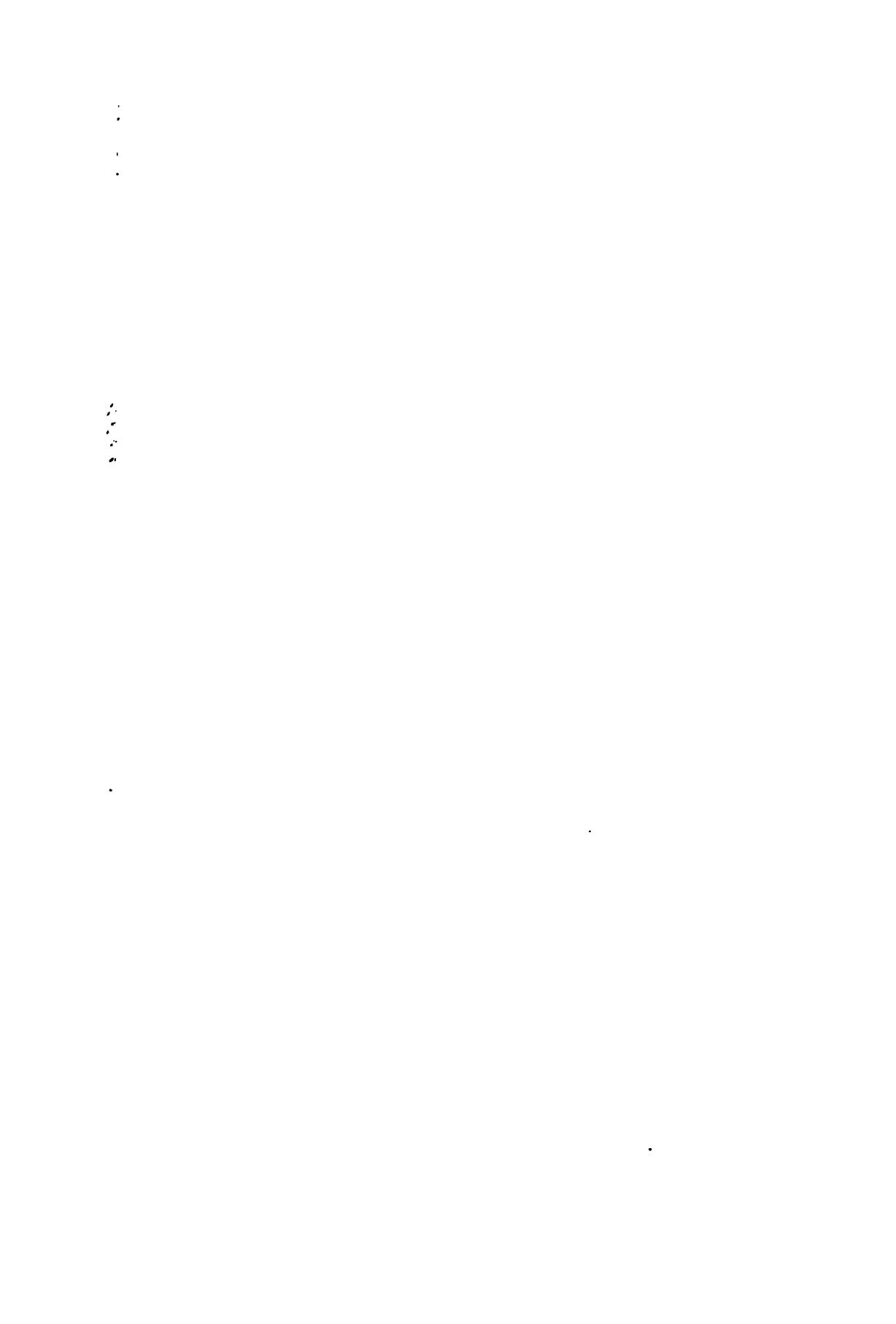
Here end the verbal recitals, the notes and documents from which have been compiled the Souvenirs of Léonard. He who has collected them ceased, at the end of 1818, to see as much as formerly of the ex-coiffeur to Marie Antoinette: not that his functions as Orderer-General or Inspector-in-Chief of State Funerals took up much of his time, but because, being in better circumstances than during the years immediately preceding this, he had less occasion to frequent and use his friends.

On one occasion alone, it is believed, did Léonard figure at the head of a funeral procession. It was upon the death of the old Prince de Condé, which occurred in 1818, shortly after the Orderer-General's installation. The Prince's mortal remains were transferred in state to Saint-Denis; and Léonard was seen preceding His defunct Highness's magnificent hearse on horseback, in a black coat of curious cut and a Henri IV hat with black feathers.... The worthy man had made no progress at all in the art of horsemanship since his journey to Montmédy : he still held himself in the saddle like the hair-dresser of the Ancien

Régime that he was.... In fact the Orderer of State Funerals, that herald in black who ambled gravely at the head of the funeral procession of a Serene Highness, resembled not a little the philosophic Sancho....

But a year after this solemnity, it became the turn of the Orderer-in-Chief; and in 1819 his staff rendered him the same honours which he had assisted in rendering to the Prince de Condé. Thus ended Léonard, whom hair-dressers to this day entitle "The Great." His fortune, composed of nothings; the art which he possessed in a higher degree than any other of lending to folly an air of elegance; his unfailing audacity: all these tend to sum up the period in which his vogue was at its highest.... One might wager that Beaumarchais borrowed more than one feature of his Figaro from the original figure of Léonard, the Queen's coiffeur.

THE END



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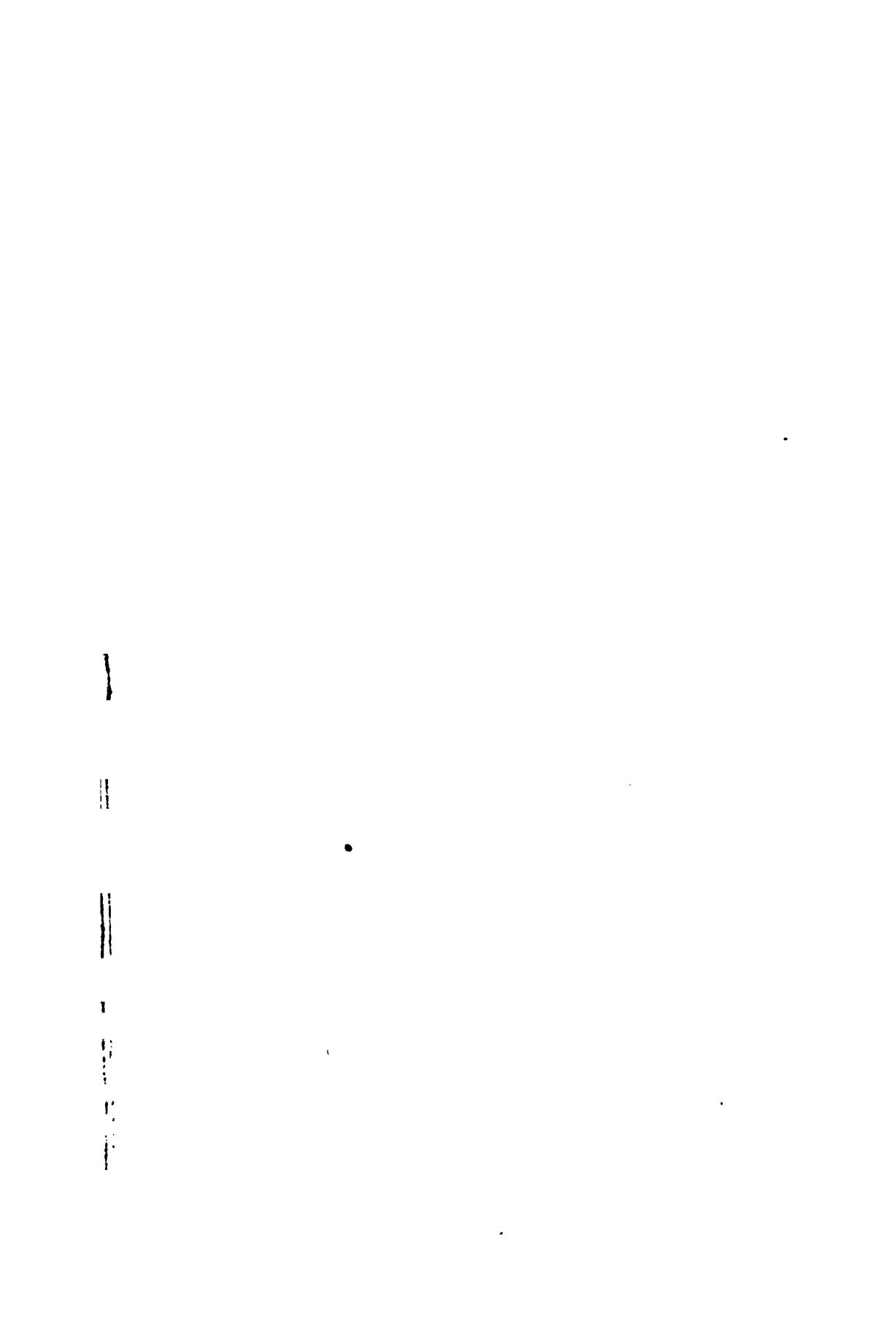
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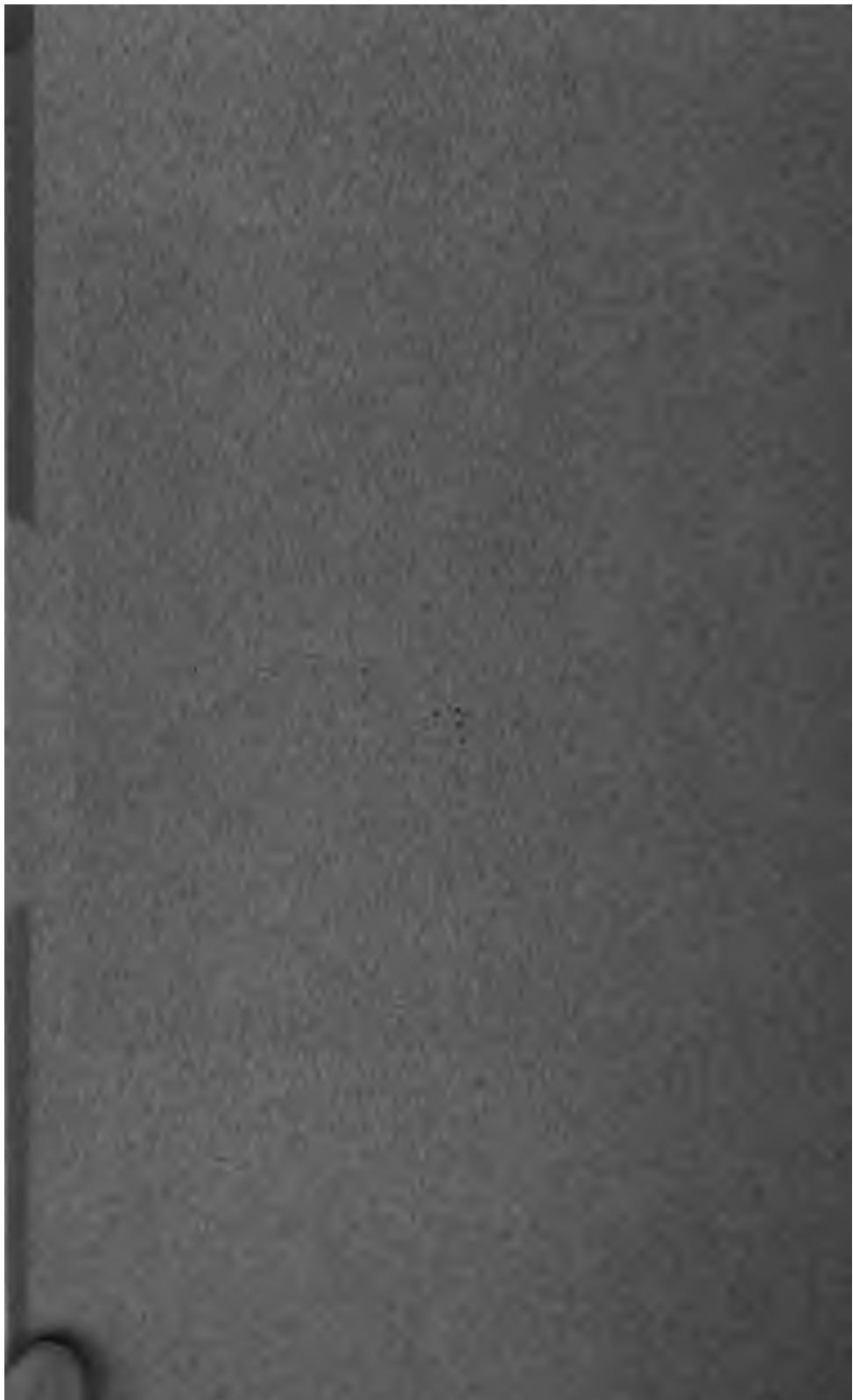












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